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Life On the Highest Plane

Life On the Highest Plane

By RUTH PAXSON

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Life
On the Highest Plane

A Study of the Spiritual Nature
and Needs of Man

By
RUTH PAXSON

VOLUME III

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I

THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

IN our studies so far we have considered God's wondrous plan of salvation as wrought out in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen what Christ came to do for us, to be in us, and to work through us. We have faced what life in Christ may be and, therefore, ought to be in every Christian. Let us now honestly face its real worth to us individually.

Is God's salvation in Christ *perfect?* Can anything be added to it? Can anything be taken from it? Surely the answer will quickly come from any life in vital relationship with the Lord Jesus, "Yes, God's salvation is perfect; it provides for every need; it satisfies every desire; it furnishes an all-sufficient Saviour. As I look into my life's deepest need I can think of nothing to add to it nor of anything that could be taken from it. God's salvation wrought out in Christ for me is of infinite worth through its perfection."

But is it *practical?* Is it possible for an ordinary person to live a life in Christ such as God seems to expect? I can imagine the answer of some to be, "The truth regarding a life lived on the highest plane is Biblical and logical but it does not match my experience nor the experience of many Christians of my

acquaintance. Is not God's plan of salvation too perfect to be practical for such a world as this? Is not life on the highest plane possible only to those who are called into special Christian service? "

Everything in God's Word contradicts this suggestion. God's plan of salvation is not only perfect but it is practical and possible for every individual believer. The Good Shepherd spoke concerning every sheep within His fold when He said, " I am come that they might have life and that they might have it *more abundantly*." Whoever has Christ's life in any measure may have it in its fulness.

Col. 2: 9–10, R. V., " For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and *in him ye are made full*, who is the head of all principality and power."

John the Baptist in two wonderful proclamations declared the entire scope of Christ's work in salvation when he said, " Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world " and " He that sent me to baptize in water, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Ghost " (John 1: 29, 33). Christ would do a twofold work for those who trust Him as Saviour; He would take away their sin and He would baptize them in the Spirit. Thus John the Baptist states that part of Christ's work is to bring the believer into as definite a relationship to the Holy Spirit as he bears to Christ, although it is to be a different relationship.

What John the Baptist had said Christ corroborated in two remarkable invitations which He gave to sinners to come to Him and drink of the Water of Life.

JOHN 4: 14, R. V., "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: *but the water that I shall give him shall BECOME IN HIM a well of water springing up unto eternal life.*"

JOHN 7: 37–38, R. V., "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. . . . *He that believeth on me,* as the Scripture hath said, *FROM WITHIN HIM shall flow rivers of living water.*"

Jesus Christ promised to bestow a gift upon the one who believed in Him as Sin-bearer which would bring perfect satisfaction and sufficiency within the believer's inmost life and which would then overflow in rich and abounding blessing into the lives of others. Christ's offer to the Samaritan woman was a gift which would change her source of supplies from a water pot to a well and then convert her life into a channel through which rivers of this Living Water would flow.

The Holy Spirit—Christ's Gift to the Believer.

We are left in no doubt as to what this gift was for the Lord Jesus states most explicitly that it was the gift of the Holy Spirit.

JOHN 7: 39, R. V., "*But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive:* for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Please note that in this verse the Lord Jesus tells us three things:

(1) What the gift was—"This spoke he of the Spirit."

(2) To whom it was to be given—"Which they that believe on him were to receive."

(3) When the gift was to be bestowed—"Jesus was not yet glorified."

It is evident from these words that His finished work as Sin-bearer must first be accomplished and then as the glorified Lord in Heaven He would bestow this wondrous gift upon every believer which would make *real within him* that abiding and abounding Life which Christ had made *possible for him.*

Still further light was thrown upon the nature of this gift in Christ's last conversation with the disciples on the eve of His exodus. He told them He was to live in them as an abiding spiritual Presence; that there would be a divine inflow of Life supernatural in quality, and a divine outflow of Life supernatural in power. They were to live as He lived and to work as He worked. To provide power for such a life He promised that "another Comforter" would come to take up His permanent abode in them.

JOHN 14: 16–18, "And I will pray the Father, and *he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.* Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for *he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* I will not leave you comfortless: *I will come to you.*"

"Another Comforter"—these words are descriptive and defining and very significant. The "Comforter," "Paraclete," means "one who is called alongside of

another to help." "Another" means one just like Himself. Some One was to come to dwell in each of them in perpetual presence and through His indwelling Christ Himself would be brought back to live within them. The One who was to abide in them was the Spirit who had indwelt, infilled and empowered the God-man when He was upon earth. Christ promised that upon His return to glory He would send back this same Spirit to indwell, to infill and to empower them. This He did on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down to form the Church, the mystic body of Christ, and to dwell in it on earth. On that day the disciples who tarried in the upper room were baptized in the Spirit.

From that day, as the divine record shows, every one who through faith in Christ as Saviour, has been organically and vitally united with the living Lord as a member of His body, has received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2: 38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and *ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*"

Acts 11:15, 17, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

Forasmuch then as *God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ;* what was I, that I could withstand God?"

The moment one receives the Sin-bearer as his Saviour he is "in the Spirit" and the Spirit is in him.

Whatever his spiritual condition the Holy Spirit indwells every Christian as an abiding, perpetual Presence. It is impossible to accept the Son and to refuse the Spirit.

ROM. 8: 9, "But ye are not in the flesh but *in the Spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*"

1 COR. 3: 16, "*Know ye not* that ye are the temple of God, and *that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*"

In the divine plan there is as definite a purpose in the gift of the Spirit as in the gift of the Son. Through the Son the sinner has life; through the Spirit the believer has life more abundant. Through the Son the sinner leaves the sphere of the natural and enters the sphere of the spiritual. Through the Spirit the believer is lifted to the highest heights of life on the spiritual plane. God has a purpose for every Christian—a life of true, deep, vital, growing spirituality—and the Holy Spirit lives within every believer as God's gracious provision for the accomplishment of this very purpose.

But do not let us think for a moment that the Spirit works apart from the Son. Life more abundant is by the Spirit. He shares with Christ the Head of the body, His intense desire that the fulness of life in the Head in Heaven shall be manifested in the body on earth. But the believer must know that that fulness is for him, he must desire to have it, and there must be a means of communicating it to him. All this is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is His task to reveal Christ

in all the perfection of His heavenly, holy life to the believer; to unfold to him the unsearchable riches which are his as an heir of God in Christ; to create within him a desire to possess his possessions; and then, to act as the channel through which the abundant life of the glorified Lord in Heaven is communicated to him.

JOHN 16: 14–15, "*He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.* . . . All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, *that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.*"

ROM. 8: 16–17, R. V., "*The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God;* and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him."

It is the Holy Spirit who works within the believer to bring him to make the choice between self and Christ. But as He works He is opposed, thwarted, challenged and resisted every step of the way by that bitter opponent. "The flesh" works as diligently to keep the believer fleshly as the Spirit works to make him spiritual.

GAL. 5: 17, "For *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: for these are contrary the one to the other.*"

Romans seven records the victory of "the flesh" and we see the Holy Spirit ignored, silenced, thwarted and quenched. Romans eight records the victory of

the Holy Spirit and we see Him victorious, active, regnant and supreme. We are compelled to believe that some advance in relationship to the Holy Spirit has taken place which has given Him this wonderful victory and we are constrained to ask God to show us what it is.

The Spirit-filled Life.

In one terse, concise command God shows us the highest point the believer can reach in his relationship to the Holy Spirit.

EPH. 5: 18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, *but be filled with the Spirit.*"

You, who have the Holy Spirit in you, give Him full right of way in your life; let Him dominate your whole being; let Him who dwells within you fill you from the center to the circumference of your life. You are in the sphere of the Spirit, therefore let the Spirit live out His life in you. Through regeneration God has endowed you with Himself and in the Person of the Spirit He dwells within you. Allow Him now to work out His perfect will unhindered through the undivided control of your whole being. Permit Him to energize you with His almighty power through filling you with Himself.

"Be filled with the Spirit" is a command given to every believer. No Christian is refused the blessing of such a precious experience and none is exempt from its responsibilities. As the refusal of life in Christ is the greatest sin of the unbeliever so the refusal of life

more abundant in the Holy Spirit's fulness is the greatest sin of the believer. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is not the privilege of a few but it is the prerogative of all believers. Since it is a command, it is not optional, but it is incumbent upon *every* Christian to be so filled.

Acts 4: 31, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together and *they were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost* and they spake the word of God with boldness."

"Be filled with the Spirit"—"Filled."

"Full of the Holy Ghost"—"Full."

"That ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God"—"Fulness."

These words suggest that there is an infinite, exhaustless fulness which the believer may receive according to his receptive capacity. He may be "filled" to-day yet to-morrow he shall need to be "filled" again so that his life may be habitually "full"; and the process of continuous infillings will need to continue as long as he lives since the source of supply is "all the fulness of God." A life "full of the Holy Ghost" should be and may be the normal life of every believer. "We may be always full, yet ever filling, the first reception of the fulness being a crisis that leads to a process."

Acts 6: 3, "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, *full of the Holy Ghost*, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

Acts 11: 24, "For he (Barnabas) was a good man, and *full of the Holy Ghost* and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

To be spiritual, then, one must be filled and be kept filled with the Holy Spirit. The habitual fulness of the Holy Spirit is the divine provision for a life lived on the highest plane. The Holy Spirit is the divinely appointed means of communication of "the abundant life" of the ascended, glorified Lord in Heaven to the believer on earth. There is a threefold manifestation of the Holy Spirit's infilling.

The realization of Christ's abiding presence. Is not this the greatest need as, I dare say, it is the deepest desire of some of us? He said, "I will come unto you" and with our intellect we believe He has come but our hearts cry out for a deeper realization of His blessed presence within. The lives of the early Christians seemed fairly surcharged with such a joyous, vivid consciousness of the presence within them of their living, glorified Lord. He was so real to them that He seemed to be the home of all their thoughts and the horizon of all their affections. Is the spiritual presence of the living Lord such an intense reality to you? Are you occupied with Christ? Are you satisfied in Christ? Can you say from your heart,

> "Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
> More than all in Thee I find"?

To have Christ abiding in us in all His fulness is to have every need supplied, every desire fulfilled, every

hunger satisfied, every thirst quenched. It is to have our whole life perpetually refreshed and replete in Him. Such a realization of His abiding presence in its fulness is one of the rich rewards of a Spirit-filled life.

EPH. 3: 16, 17, 19, R. V., "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be *strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; . . . That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. . . . That ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.*"

The reproduction of Christ's holy life within the believer is another unspeakably precious benefit of the Spirit-filled life. Who of us has ever had a real vision of the Lord Jesus who has not abhorred his own sinfulness and longed passionately for Christ's holiness? Who has ever really seen the King in His beauty and not longed intensely to be like Him? But His is a life that defies imitation. No counterfeit is ever so quickly detected and so heartily detested as a counterfeit of the Christ. There is no possibility of likeness to the character seen in Jesus Christ except through the reproduction of His life in us.

To communicate the life of the living Head in heaven to the body on earth, making the visible part of Christ of the same character as the invisible part, is the work of the Holy Spirit. To reproduce the life of the Lord Jesus in us in a growing perfection is the mission of the Holy Spirit and His ability to perform this task is in proportion to the freedom given Him to do it. The Spirit-filled Christian is the one who is most like his Lord.

2 Cor. 3: 18, R. V., "But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, *are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.*"

Gal. 5: 22–23, R. V., "But *the fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, selfcontrol: against such there is no law."

Compressed into these nine exquisite graces is a marvellous word-picture of the character of Jesus Christ in its essential beauty, symmetry and perfection. Such character can never be produced through human effort for it is not the product of human nature but the fruit of the divine nature. Only the divine can produce the divine. "As without the sun the photographic image cannot be printed upon the sensitized film, so apart from the Holy Spirit, the moral glories of the Lord Jesus can never become ours in any sense save that of desire." But, when the Holy Spirit is permitted to fill us, He brings forth His own fruit in a character of growing likeness to that of our Lord.

The reënactment of Christ's supernatural power through us is the third outstanding mark of a Spirit-filled life. All power belongs unto God and He has delegated this power to His Son and the Son in turn transmits that power to the one whose life is united with His. When He gave that last commission to the disciples He said, "All power hath been given unto me in heaven and upon earth, *go ye therefore* and make disciples of all the nations." The "therefore" fully implies that, as He sent them forth to accomplish such a superhuman task, He promised to endue them with

supernatural power. Just before His ascension He told them to wait until they were "endued with power from on high" and in giving this command He reiterated His promise to send forth to them the Holy Spirit upon His return to glory (Luke 24: 49). So their enduement with power and their reception of the Holy Spirit evidently had a vital connection. The last words He spoke, as He was lifted up out of their sight, declared this.

ACTS 1: 8, "But *ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:* and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

A study of the book of Acts shows us that those who were filled with the Holy Spirit were full of power. They had power to suffer and to sacrifice; to teach and to preach; to witness and to work. Thousands of souls were born into the Kingdom of God and blessed through their ministry. But this work of grace was not wrought through human energy, zeal, wisdom or eloquence, but through the power of the ascended Lord poured forth through Spirit-filled lives.

Have you the power of the Holy Spirit? Through you is He working mightily to convict men of sin, to constrain them to believe in Christ, and to conform them to the image of the Lord Jesus? If not, is it because you are not *filled* with the Holy Spirit? Wherever He is in fulness He manifests Himself in power. "In order to have the Holy Spirit's competency we must have His control."

One day while rowing I noticed a break in the bank and a veritable river was flowing out of the lake through the adjoining fields making everything round about rich in foliage and fruitage. Inquiring of one of my companions why with such a continuous outflow of water the lake did not go dry, he replied, "Oh! there are innumerable springs in the bottom and as much water as flows out through the river flows in through the unseen springs." Such inflow and outflow symbolizes a Spirit-filled life.

"*In him a well,*" the Holy Spirit in His fulness is Christ's gift to every believer. He dwells within, a well of Living Water, a continuously upspringing fountain. With Him within there is no need for dearth. The promise is he "*shall never thirst.*" The supply will be commensurate to the need. Satisfaction and sufficiency characterize the Spirit-filled life.

"*Out of him rivers.*" The inflow demands and provides an outflow. Satisfaction in Christ means the overflow of Christ. The Holy Spirit in complete, continuous control is a well of Living Water within us constantly springing up in ever increasing fulness until there are rivers of Living Water flowing into other lives. Thus the Spirit-filled life is one of perennial freshness, fragrance, fulness and fruitfulness.

Is such a life yours? If not, do you desire it? It is available; it is obtainable; it is for you if you thirst. "*If any man thirst.*" Do you know there is more of the Holy Spirit for you than you have yet claimed? Have you enough of Him to make you want more? Then listen to the invitation freely extended to you.

"If any man thirst let him come unto me and *drink*." Drink until you are satisfied, until you are full, yea, until you are overflowing. The fulness of the Holy Spirit is for every one who thirsts for it and who will meet God's simple and clearly stated conditions.

"Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender, last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter, bequeathed
With us to dwell.
And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone."

II

THE PREREQUISITE TO FULNESS

Cleansing

"GOD hath not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness," and if we measure up to our calling as saints, all uncleanness must go. The infilling of the Holy Spirit demands the cleansing of the life. Two commands given to Christians in regard to their relationship to the Holy Spirit reveal this fact very strikingly.

Eph. 4: 30, "And *grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,* whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Grieve is a love word. You cannot grieve one who does not love you. You can hurt him or anger him but you cannot grieve him. To grieve the Holy Spirit means that we are causing pain to Some One who loves us. What, then, in us causes this divine One grief?

He is the Spirit of *truth* (John 14: 17) so anything false, deceitful, hypocritical, grieves Him.

He is the Spirit of *faith* (2 Cor. 4: 13) so doubt, unbelief, distrust, worry, anxiety, grieve Him.

He is the Spirit of *grace* (Heb. 10: 29) so that which is hard, bitter, ungracious, unthankful, malicious, unforgiving or unloving, grieves Him.

He is the Spirit of *holiness* (Rom. 1: 4) so anything unclean, defiling or degrading, grieves Him.

He is the Spirit of *wisdom and revelation* (Eph. 1: 17) so ignorance, conceit, arrogance and folly, grieve Him.

He is the Spirit of *power, love and discipline* (2 Tim. 1: 7) so that which is barren, fruitless, disorderly, confused and uncontrolled, grieves Him.

He is the Spirit of *life* (Rom. 8: 2) so anything that savours of indifference, lukewarmness, spiritual dulness, and deadness, grieves Him.

He is the Spirit of *glory* (1 Pet. 4: 14) so anything worldly, earthly or fleshly, grieves Him.

He dwells within us to enable us "to grow up into Christ in all things" (Eph. 4: 15); to bring us daily into conformity to Christ's image (2 Cor. 3: 18); until we have reached "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 13); so anything in us which hinders Him in carrying out this purpose grieves Him. Knowingly, wilfully, to permit anything which is contrary to what the Holy Spirit Himself is to remain in your life, now His domain, must mean that you love sin more than you love Him. Such unfaithfulness grieves Him. Refusing obedience to God's revealed will constitutes a rejection of Him in favour of His enemy.

Spirituality depends upon an harmonious and happy relationship with our divine Helper and Advocate. Sin, then, which impairs such relationship must inevitably hinder any true spirituality. As long as we are indulging known sin we are living in the same abode with a grieved Spirit who is thereby hindered from manifesting Himself fully in and through us. It

is clear, then, that if one is to be filled with the Holy Spirit all conscious, wilful sin must be put away. "God does not require golden vessels, neither does He seek for silver ones, but He must have clean ones." To be filled one must be cleansed.

1 THESS. 5: 19, "*Quench not the Spirit.*"

We "grieve" the Spirit when we say "yes" to Satan when he lures us into sin. We "quench" the Spirit when we say "no" to God when He woos us into sanctification and service. To bring the believer to will to let God's will have absolute sway over the entire being is part of the Spirit's work, perhaps it is His hardest task. Self-will is a latent thing in every one of us which is prone to manifest itself in secret if not in open rebellion against God.

The only cure for self-will is a deliberate, determined choice to do God's will in all things, at all times, at all costs. It is to have one's heart firmly fixed upon the doing of God's will as the rule for daily life and to permit no exception to this rule. "So a yieldedness to the will of God is not demonstrated by some one particular issue; it is rather a matter of having taken the will of God as the rule of one's life. To be in the will of God is simply to be willing to do His will without reference to any particular thing He may choose. It is electing His will to be final, even before we know what He may wish us to do. It is, therefore, not a question of being willing to do some one thing; it is a question of being willing to do *any-*

thing, when, where and how it may seem best in His heart of love." *

God's first man had the right to will and the power to will Godward. But he chose to will Satanward. God's second Man had the right to will and the power to will Godward which He invariably did in every choice. If you are a Christian, you are God's new man in Christ. You have the right to will and the Holy Spirit dwells within you to enable you always to will Godward. But if you say "No" to God at any point you have allied yourself with the evil forces which are in rebellion against God. Such resistance and rebellion is sin and the Holy Spirit cannot occupy fully His abode in your life until you are cleansed.

The indwelling Spirit longs to fill the life of each one whom He indwells. So He is constantly working toward the purifying of the life. Indeed He is there for that very purpose. In a darkened room there would be much of dust which would pass unnoticed but, when the sun shines in, it is all brought out into the light. The more fully the light fills the room the more perfectly the dust is revealed. The Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer brings out into the light the sin in the life and the more fully He indwells the more perfect will be the revelation and recognition of sin. The nearer God comes to us the more sensitive to sin are we made. Some things which five years ago or a year ago or a month ago you would not have called sin you now acknowledge to be sin. The Holy Spirit who dwells in us is there to purify our hearts

* "*He that is Spiritual*," L. S. Chafer, page 113.

and to sanctify our lives. "Giving them the Holy Ghost, purifying their hearts by faith."

The Means of Cleansing.

1 JOHN 1: 7, "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

For sinner and saint alike nothing but the blood of Jesus suffices to cleanse from sin. For the unsaved sinner it removes the guilt of sin. For the sinning saint it removes the defilement of sin. The Christian is in constant contact with sin and the very tense of the verb used in this verse "cleanseth" shows that he never gets beyond the need of the cleansing blood of Christ.

The Method of Cleansing.

The grieved Spirit will let us know that He is grieved and what it is that grieves Him. He will convict us of the sin that thwarts and throttles Him and He will point us to the cleansing blood of Christ. He will open the Word to 1 John 1: 9 and show us what our part is. Then our responsibility begins. God requires but one thing of us—a frank, full confession prompted by a true heart repentance.

1 JOHN 1: 9, "*If we confess our sins,* he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and *to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

But, while He requires only this simple, honest confession, He will accept no substitute for it. Regret and remorse because of suffering from sin's punish-

ment is not confession; a forced acknowledgment when caught in some offense which is in reality merely the admission of transgression rather than of *the sin* of the transgression, is not confession; prayer in which a short, vague, half-concealed acknowledgment of sin is overshadowed by a long accompaniment of justification and vindication of self, will not pass with God for a bona fide confession from the heart. Confession of sin is made primarily to God and often only to Him. But, if one has wronged another and sin has placed a barrier between them, confession of that sin before the other may be required to remove the barrier. God's cleansing of us may await our confession to a brother. But this precious promise does hold out to us the blessed assurance that, when honest confession of known sin is frankly made to God, He instantly forgives and cleanses. We are thereby brought into perfect adjustment to an ungrieved, unquenched Spirit and every hindrance to His infilling is removed.

The Measure of Cleansing.

The measure of cleansing is from all defilement of both flesh and spirit. Separation from every defiling thing is a prerequisite to the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

2 Cor. 7: 1, "Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, *let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,* perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

God demands a cleansing that reaches from the innermost desire to the outermost deed; that goes from the core to the circumference. He asks us to take His conception of sin which regards a lustful look as truly

sin as a lustful act; which calls hate in the heart sin as much as murder by the hand; which sees in irritability of spirit the seed of the outburst of temper. God asks for the cleansing of both the inner and outer part of the temple which He indwells. Even after we have "cleansed ourselves" by deliberately putting out of our lives everything which we know to be sinful there will be much when once He fills the life which the Holy Spirit will convict us of as unclean and unholy.

God's withholding of His presence in power from His own children until sin is put away is very strikingly revealed in His dealings with the children of Israel over Achan's sin. They had gained a marvellous victory at Jericho. The city and all that was in it had been delivered to them by the Lord. God had told them beforehand that everything in the city was accursed and that no one of them was to take anything of the spoils for himself or he, too, would be accursed. Achan, coveting gold, silver, and a Babylonish garment, took them and hid them under his tent. No eye but that of the all-seeing God saw him do it. The children of Israel, rejoicing in the signal victory over Jericho, marched against the smaller city of Ai with absolute assurance of a similar victory, only to meet with an overwhelming defeat. Joshua fell on his face before God and offered a prayer in which he charged God with blame for such humiliation before their enemies. But God commanded him to stop praying and told him that He would continue to withhold His presence from the children of Israel until

the accursed thing was taken away from among them. Not until the man who had coveted, stolen and deceived, was found and confession of sin was made did God again dwell in victory and in power among the children of Israel.

Perhaps you have been praying fervently for the fulness of the Holy Spirit while all the time there has been the continued indulgence of some known sin, the wilful disobedience of some known command, or the deliberate resistance to God's clearly revealed will. If so, God is saying to you just now, " Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face. Thou hast sinned, neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify yourselves, thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you " (Josh. 7: 10–13). So long as you are living with a grieved or a quenched Spirit you cannot be filled. To be filled one must be cleansed.

I looked the other day upon the snow-clad summit of the Silberhorn as it glistened in the sun. It was a marvellous symbol of purity. What was the cause of its spotlessness? There was nothing between it and the Heaven above. It lay open to receive the unstained, unsullied snow sent down from Heaven. Oh! that your heart and mine might be as pure. And they may be if there is no known sin between God and us and our lives lay open to the moment by moment infilling of the blessed Holy Spirit.

III

THE BELIEVER'S PART IN BECOMING SPIRIT-FILLED

Yielding

IN the two wondrous gifts of His Son and His Spirit God has made perfect provision for a life of true spirituality. God's twofold gift to us was not a partial gift. When He gave Christ He gave all of Christ; when He gave the Holy Spirit He gave all of the Holy Spirit. *He withheld nothing from us.* Love not only gave its best but its all. When God gave Christ to us He gave Him in all the fulness of His perfect life and His perfected work. When God gave the Holy Spirit He gave Him to indwell, to infill and to empower. God is not a niggardly, grudging Giver. In the glorified Christ through the fulness of the Holy Spirit He has given all that He has to give to make us spiritual. This is the perfection of grace, the acme even of divine giving.

God has made the provision but you must make the decision whether you will be Spirit-filled or not. There is a place in God's dealings with men beyond which He cannot go. He Himself set this boundary line in man's right to will. He sets the feast before you but He cannot compel you to eat. He opens the door into the abundant life but He cannot coerce you to enter. He places in the bank of God a deposit

that makes you a spiritual multimillionaire but He cannot write your checks. God has done His part, now you must do yours.

The responsibility for fulness or lack of fulness is now in your hands. He will be limited in the giving of the fulness of His Spirit by one thing only—the room given to Him to fill. "You may have all the fulness you will make room for." To be Spirit-filled requires your active, hearty coöperation with God. You have a very clearly defined part in becoming spiritual.

Yielding—The Believer's Part in becoming Spirit-filled.

The basic principle in a spiritual life lies in its control. The life of the natural man is wholly in the control of "the old man"; the life of the carnal Christian is partially in the control of self. If one determines to become a Spirit-filled Christian the right to reign must be taken altogether from "the old man" and given into the hands of the Lord Jesus. What the Holy Spirit wishes the believer to do and what He works to bring him to do, is to coöperate with Him in this matter by refusing deliberately the further reign of self and by choosing voluntarily the sovereignty of Christ over his life, yielding to Him as Lord and Master.

Rom. 6: 16, "Know ye not, that *to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey,* his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness."

Rom. 6: 19, "I speak after the manner of men because of

the infirmity of your flesh: *for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness* and to iniquity unto iniquity; even *so now yield your members servants to righteousness* unto holiness."

To yield the life unto God is the first step in a continuous walk in the Spirit. This step takes us by our own choice out of the realm of self-will into the realm of God's will. It takes us back to our God-intended, God-provided center. It gives us a base for all future growth in spiritual things. It furnishes us with new headquarters from which all our future life will be directed. In yielding to Christ we definitely align ourselves with the perfect will of God and choose it to be the rule of our lives in all things forever afterward. We adopt the language of Christ which, whether in the great crises of life such as those in the wilderness, in Gethsemane or on Calvary, or in the ordinary walk and work of daily life in the carpenter shop and the home, was invariably "Thy will be done." In yielding to the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ we deliberately choose from that time on to do His will instead of our own in all things and for all time.

The Life Yielded—Why?

There are two quite diverse motives that lead people to yield themselves wholly to the Lord. Some make the approach to a yielded life along the avenue of their own need. They hunger and thirst for more of Christ. They long to realize more perfectly their inheritance in Him.

EPH. 1: 11, "*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,*

being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Others come into a yielded life over the pathway of Christ's claim. They recognize the loneliness and yearning of Christ's heart for more of them. They desire to have Him possess to the full His inheritance in them.

EPH. 1: 18, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; *that ye may know* what is the hope of his calling, and *what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*"

Both our need of Him and His of us call for the yielding of our lives to Him. Every relationship which Christ bears to us is made ineffectual in an unyielded life. It is impossible for Christ to become all that He designs and desires to become apart from a wholly yielded life. He is handicapped and hindered in all He would do in and through us by our unwillingness to have it done; as Saviour He cannot save us from sin we insist upon retaining; as Head of the body He cannot direct a stubborn member; as Lord He cannot reveal His will to one who does not want to know it or to obey it; as Life He cannot fill what is already filled with a totally different substance; as Sanctifier He cannot separate us wholly unto Himself when we prefer to live unto self and the world; as Captain He cannot use us to defeat the enemy when we ourselves already have allowed him to defeat us. Christ is checked at every turn in an unyielded life and rendered practically impotent. The realization and enjoyment of

our precious inheritance in Him and of His purchased inheritance in us depends upon our unconditional yielding to Him.

There is a basic motive in the yielding of the life to Christ which when discovered is both convincing and compelling. To His glory may I share with you the way in which God graciously led me to this discovery and the revolutionary change it wrought in my relationship to the Lord Jesus.

Becoming a Christian when a girl I experienced deep and real joy in the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins and in the fellowship of Christ. I truly loved my Lord and longed to live so that others, especially members of my family, would see that He was indeed my Saviour. Though born again I knew nothing of a yielded life and consequently some of the old sins continued to manifest themselves in the same old way. One of the most outstanding was temper. Over and over again it was lost and hasty, unkind words said even to those nearest and dearest. Having what often accompanies a quick temper, a sensitive, affectionate heart, I would go apart after an outburst and cry as though my heart would break. Times without number the resolve was made never to lose my temper again and the attempt was made to conquer it by will power, but all to no avail, and I continued in a life of constant defeat and miserable failure. Conscious of the evident hypocrisy in such a life, all the joy experienced in conversion left me. Truly loving the Lord I hated myself for the caricature of Him I was giving to others.

One day, thoroughly discouraged and disheartened by an overwhelming sense of defeat, I sought the quiet of my own room and shut myself in with the Lord determined to stay until something happened. I told the Lord that either He must show me *what* a truly Christian life was and *how* to live it or I would renounce my profession of Christ and ask to have my name taken from the church roll. I was desperately in earnest and God always meets one who truly seeks Him. He graciously met me that day and answered both my questions.

Two verses from His Word He used to flood my soul with light. My prayer is that again He may use them to bring similar joy and peace to others discouraged and defeated.

1 Cor. 6: 19–20, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and *ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price:* therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Through three unforgetable invincible statements of truth God unveiled the essence of a yielded life and revealed its basic motive.

"What? *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?*" No, until that day I did not know that my body had any relationship whatsoever to my conversion neither did I know that the Holy Spirit had taken it to be His temple. That God laid claim to my body for His habitation and that the Holy Spirit *had already* made it His home was to me a star-

tling revelation. Think for a moment what that means —God, the Holy One actually dwelling in your human body! Suppose some earthly king would send word that he wanted to spend just one day in your home. What a house-cleaning would take place! How all the best and loveliest things would be taken out to use! What preparation would be made that everything would be exactly fitting and worthy of such an honoured guest! But oh! what an unclean, unfit, unworthy place we often ask the King of kings and Lord of lords to live in, not for a day but for a lifetime! What an unholy, desecrated temple we offer to the Holy Spirit!

"But I have given the Lord my soul, what need hath He of my body?" was the question that came into my mind. I saw faintly that day but with growing clearness every day since why God asks for our bodies. Dare we say it—it is His need of a channel through which He may give to a world that knows Him not a revelation of who He is and of His yearning love for men. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" and men saw and knew who the Father was by the presence of the Son on earth. Christ is now in Heaven. But oh! isn't His presence needed here on earth? Isn't He needed in your city? In your church? In your school? In your office? In your social circle? In your home? And how is the glorified Christ to presence Himself here on earth? In what way will He reveal Himself to men now?

Christ has just two ways of making Himself known; one is through His Word. But countless thousands

do not even possess a Bible, and countless millions could not read it if they did. The other way is through us in whom He dwells as the Life of our life. Oh! do you not see how He needs your body to be wholly His? To-day He needs eyes, ears, lips, hands, feet, minds, hearts, wills and all that makes up a human personality for the manifestation of Himself on earth as truly as these things were needed when He dwelt as the incarnate Son in a human body. When Christ was upon earth it was not merely His teaching and preaching that won men to Him. It was His Life, His Personal presence, Himself. So to-day men need to see Christ; to feel His presence; to be brought face to face with Him. The Lord Jesus showed me that day that He wanted and needed my body with my entire human personality to indwell and to use as a medium of revealing Himself to others.

There was something wondrously beautiful in the thought that the Lord of glory could ever have need of me. I knew only too well how desperately I needed Him. Moment by moment I needed to draw all my life from Him as the branch lives in the life of the vine. But to think that He needed me! that there was fruit to be borne that could only be borne on a branch! that some life somewhere would need to see Christ in me! It was a marvellously convincing appeal yet, I am ashamed to record it even now so many years afterward, I hesitated to yield.

Was my life not my own? Was it not asking a great deal to turn it over to the absolute sovereignty of another? Should I relinquish *all* right to its posses-

sion and control? Was it safe to do so? Was it reasonable? Was it needful? Oh! the feasible, plausible arguments that self advanced to retain the kingship over my life!

All this reluctance was anticipated by the Lord and He was prepared to meet it. *"What? Know ye that ye are not your own?"* Like a sharp two-edged sword these words penetrated to my innermost being and lodged there. How they cut into shreds every argument advanced against such a wholesale yielding of myself to God! *"Know ye that ye are not your own?"* How they severed the undergirding beneath all my thinking concerning my rights in myself! *"Know ye that ye are not your own?"* How they brought to light the hitherto disguised hypocrisy of my profession as a Christian in saying that I belonged to Jesus Christ yet all the while retaining in my own hands the reins of government! *"Know ye that ye are not your own?"* How these words went straight to the very heart of the issue like an axe laid at the root of the tree—the enthronement of Jesus Christ as Lord over my life or the continued reign of self!

A flood of light entered my soul through that simple but imperative question of the Lord. I was convinced of the rightfulness of God's claim upon me but I was not yet constrained to yield to it. Oh! the incredible, unthinkable stubbornness to resist and refuse in the light of such clear conviction! Oh! the infinite, unwearying patience of the divine Heart to continue to woo and to work in the face of such wilfulness!

I was not only stubborn but fearful. If I let go

and put myself wholly and unconditionally in His possession and control what might He not take from me? What might He not ask of me? I was in the same state of mind as was the college girl who said she would like to yield herself wholly to God but she was afraid He would take advantage of her. To put the truth very bluntly I would have been glad to have turned over to the Lord for His possession and control all the unpleasant, unmanageable, uncontrollable part of myself if He would have left the rest to me!

But God dealt very gently and tenderly with me, drawing me closer and closer to Himself by the cords of love. To master my will He had to melt my heart. "What? know ye that ye are not your own *for ye are bought with a price?*" Bought! *Not my own because bought!* Here again was something new. I had been thinking that by yielding to Christ I would be conferring the ownership of my life upon Him, that I would be making an outright gift to Him. But God showed me that day that *I already belonged to Christ* by the right of purchase and that Christ's claim to the undivided possession and control of my life was an absolutely legitimate one. Who could deny one the right to that which He had purchased?

Convinced again and still not constrained to yield. "Ye are not your own for ye are bought *with a price.*" Oh! THAT PRICE! "Redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The precious blood of Christ the price paid for me! The life of the spotless, stainless, sinless

Son of God laid down for my paltry, insignificant, sinful, selfish life! A Life given for a life!

2 Cor. 5: 15, "And that *he died* for all, *that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him* which died for them, and rose again."

A Life for a Life

"Oh, hands, outstretched upon the tree,
Nail-pierced by shameless cruelty!
Why, blessed Christ, had this to be?
A voice most loving said to me:
'Dear child, these hands of Mine were bruised
That thine in ministry be used
In loving service such as Mine;
My hands were given to purchase thine.'

"Oh, feet of Christ, so rent and torn!
How could such suffering be borne?
In life, so often spent and worn,
In death, must they be given to scorn?
'On mercy's errands thine may go,
A free, glad helpfulness to show;
It was for thee,' the Saviour said,
'My feet for thine so sadly bled.'

"Oh, head of Christ, with thorn-wrought crown!
In grief and agony bowed down;
Why didst Thy heavenly renown
Exchange for earthly jeer and frown?
'My child, beneath those thorns I bought
Thy intellect and all its thought;
The glory-crown was left for thee,
That thou mightst give thy mind to Me.'

"Oh, heart of Christ! Oh, wounded side!
Oh, Man of Sorrows, crucified!
Who in such anguish, sinless, died,
Hast Thou done aught for me beside?
'Ah, child of mine, my heart was riven
That thou mightst live and love in Heaven;
That all thy heart, thy life, might be
Surrendered joyfully to Me.'"

I had been saying "*Must* I give myself to Him?" But on that day kneeling in spirit at the foot of the Cross of Christ I said from the depths of my heart "*May* I yield all that I am and have for time and for eternity to Him who gave all for me?"

And what was the basic motive in the yielding? It was the joyous response of love to Love following the spiritual apprehension of the reasonableness and rightfulness of Christ's claim upon my life and the use He desired to make of it.

Then let us define yielding. Yielding is the definite, deliberate, voluntary transference of the undivided possession, control and use of the whole being, spirit, soul and body from self to Christ, to whom it rightfully belongs by creation and by purchase. In yielding to Christ we crown Him Lord of all in our lives. "Consecration does not confer ownership, it presumes it. It is not *in order to be His,* but *because we are His,* that we yield up our lives. It is *purchase* that gives *title; delivery* simply gives *possession.* The question is not, 'Do I belong to God?' but 'Have I yielded to God that which already belongs to Him?'" *

**The Surrendered Life,* J. H. McConkey, page 17.

In a city in North China there was a Girls' School. The students grew in numbers which necessitated more buildings. Adjoining the school were just the buildings needed, the property of a Chinese family. After much bargaining a sale was effected. The papers were drawn up and the purchase price paid. In the autumn the school fully expected to open work in the new buildings. But they were unable to do so. Why not? *The Chinese family had not moved out.* Purchase gives title but only delivery gives possession.

Christ has the title deed to your life. The price was paid nearly two thousand years ago. It is His by the right of purchase. Have you moved out that He may move in and occupy what He already possesses?

Christ has the right to exempt you from His property; He *is* Lord and He has the right to command you to yield. But Christ's way is to constrain by love rather than to conquer by force. So He beseeches us by the innumerable mercies of God of which we are daily the recipients to yield ourselves to Him.

ROM. 12: 1, "*I beseech you* therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*"

Yielding is the glad, joyous, willing response of love to Love. "We love him because he first loved us." Bought with a price, "therefore" we gladly glorify Him in our body and spirit, which are His. "I beseech you"—I have given My life in death for you, will you not give yours in life for Me? True yielding is just

the utter abandonment of love. It is the call of the Bridegroom "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away," to which the bride joyfully responds, "I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me."

Oh! my friend, does this not take the "must" out of surrender for you? Does it not answer the question "Is it safe?" Have you only thought of yielding in the light of what you would have to give up? To yield does involve a giving up but it means giving up what really is not yours; it means giving up something only to get something of infinitely greater worth; yes, it means giving up something that He needs for His use to the One we love best; more than all it means giving up something to the One who loves us with a love so great that He died for us and now waits to bestow upon us all the exhaustless treasures that are ours in Him. Can we not trust "the Man who died for us"?

Rom. 8: 32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, *how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*"

1 Cor. 3: 21–23, "Therefore let no man glory in men. *For all things are yours;* Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; *all are yours; and ye are Christ's;* and Christ is God's."

"Surrender taken alone is a plunge into a cold void. When it is a surrender to the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me it is the bright home coming of the soul to the seat and sphere of life and power."

The Life Yielded. What?

We have seen what yielding is—the transference of the ownership and control of the life from self to Christ. But self will relinquish nothing except under compulsion. So it is necessary to understand at the outset just what the full measurement of a yielded life is.

May we clear the atmosphere by saying what yielding is not. It is not mere subscription to a creed; nor is it a giving of one's self to a certain kind or field of service; nor is it merely stripping the life of certain evil or questionable practices. How many a person has said, "I am afraid to yield myself wholly to the Lord for I know He will make me believe something I can't believe, or will ask me to go somewhere that I do not want to go, or will rob me of something that I want to keep." To such yielding is altogether a negative thing while in reality it is essentially positive. God wants *us*. It is the whole of ourselves that He asks us to yield to Him that our whole life may be lived unto the will of God.

Rom. 6: 13, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: *but yield yourselves unto God,* as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

2 Cor. 8: 5, "And this they did, not as we hoped, but *first gave their own selves to the Lord,* and unto us by the will of God."

1 Pet. 4: 2, "That he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but *to the will of God.*"

Then God specifies the measurement a bit more explicitly lest we be satisfied merely with "the saving of our soul" or "the giving of our heart to the Lord." It is the easiest thing in the world to use the phraseology of consecration while missing the reality of it. It is possible to deceive ourselves by surrendering the invisible and intangible thing while holding on to the visible and tangible. So God asks for the body as well as for the spirit and soul. Read again Rom. 12: 1.

God leaves no loophole in this matter of yielding. He knows full well how the beauty of a life may be marred and its testimony nullified by the unyieldedness of even one member of the body. Who can read the Epistle of James and not know that many a life fails of complete surrender through an unyielded tongue? What possibilities for covetousness through an unyielded eye? What paths of wickedness and worldliness are open before unyielded feet! What a catch-all for gossip, slander and idle talk, is an unyielded ear! What a loss to God in His service is an unyielded voice! God specifies the measurement of surrender and it reaches out to include every member of your body. "*Yield your members* as instruments of righteousness unto God."

"Yourselves"
"Your bodies"
"Your members"

It is all-inclusive. Nothing is omitted and nothing is exempt. God has sanctified our whole personality. He has set it all apart as His own personal possession and for His own use. Our consecration is the counter-

part of God's sanctification. God has taken us to be His own: He has said, "Thou art mine." We yield ourselves as those belonging unto Him and sanctify Christ, as Lord, in our hearts and say, "Lord, I am Thine, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

1 THESS. 5: 23, "And *the very God of peace sanctify you wholly;* and I pray God *your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless* unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 PET. 3: 15, R. V., "But *sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.*"

The measure of our yielding is the measure of our human life. It includes everything *inside,* spirit, mind, heart, will, affections. It includes everything *outside,* home, children, possessions, occupation. It includes everything *allied,* friendships, time, money, pleasures, life plans.

It includes our past, present and future. No matter what the past has held of sin, sorrow or self it is all handed over to Christ in a once-for-all committal. But some can surrender the past who find it difficult to yield the present to Christ's control. There is the desire to reserve a bit of ground. Others can surrender the past and present because driven to it by disheartenment or desperation but they are fearful to put the future wholly into His keeping. How do they know that God can be trusted to be faithful or that they desire to live under His absolute sway for all time?

When giving a message on the yielded life at a

Conference I noticed the anxious, troubled face of a woman on the front seat. I said, "You are able to trust July to God but fearful to put September into His keeping." Her face lighted up with a smile which was in truth an acknowledgment of being caught in the very act of worry. After the meeting she said, "That remark about committing September to the Lord hit me. I could be very happy here now but I must have an operation in September and I have only half enjoyed this beautiful place because I am worrying over September!"

Yielding includes our worst and our best. Some find it very difficult to believe that God can accept or want them because there is so much of "the worst" that persists in their lives. But "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" is an invitation extended to the sinning saint as truly as to the sinner. Grace abounds from the beginning clear through to the end of our lives. So no matter how often we have repeated the same sin if we come yielding ourselves unconditionally to Him He waits to receive us, and the blood of Jesus Christ is equal to any demand made upon it for cleansing.

Others find no difficulty in bringing to God the dregs of sin in their unyielded lives but find it extremely hard to yield their best to Him. In fact they see no necessity to do so. Here is some one with very excellent judgment. The superior quality of it is recognized by the possessor who almost believes in his infallibility on all matters. The result is a domineering, overbearing person with whom it is exceedingly difficult for

others to work. This point was mentioned once before a group of Christian workers. Afterward a missionary said, "You talked about me this morning! I am that person with the good judgment and I am sure I have made things difficult for my fellow-missionaries. I see now that even my good judgment must be yielded to the Lord."

Here is another who is very efficient and she holds the same opinion of herself that a young business woman held who said, "Why do I need to ask the Lord how to do something when, if I use my own good sense, I know as well as He how to do it?" That is putting it very crudely but is not our failure often due to a similiar self-trust?

Perhaps here is one with a charming personality who is extremely popular and easily draws a crowd about her. She can see the need of some homely, unattractive person yielding herself to the Lord to be made inwardly beautiful. But why should she do so? Does she not attract people already? Oh! but to whom? To herself or to her Lord? Our best can hinder the revelation of Christ through us as truly as our worst.

In taking the measure of our surrender to the Lord Jesus it should be a settled matter that there can be no reservations. We cannot set aside any part of our lives and earmark it "reserved." If Christ is to be Lord, He must be Lord of all. We must let Christ begin at the center and go to the circumference of our lives laying hold of all in His path and bringing it under His dominion.

It should also be understood that there can be no substitutes offered to the Lord. We cannot buy God off with money or bribe Him to accept our time, talents or service in lieu of ourselves. Having once offered ourselves in a glad, willing yielding to the Lord, all that we have in the way of natural endowment, acquired skill or bestowed wealth will accompany such surrender but can never be accepted by God as a substitute for it. God wants first of all "not yours" but "you."

Let it be understood also that we cannot bring just the troublesome, unmanageable parts of our lives to God asking Him for spiritual repairs while we withhold the will, the heart, the mind. How much we are like the man who took the hands of his clock to the jeweller and asked him to regulate them as they did not keep time. "Bring me the whole clock," said the jeweller, "the cause of the inaccuracy is not in the hands." "No!" said the owner, "you will take it all to pieces and it will cost me a lot! It is the hands that go wrong!" The measure of our yielding is the measure of our life; the refusal to yield any part of it, however small or insignificant it may seem to us, is an act of rebellion and will make impossible the fulness of the Holy Spirit in our lives. These lines we would do well to repeat frequently:

"Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Thou art the Potter,
I am the clay.

Make me and mould me
After Thy will,
While I am waiting
Silent and still."

The Life Yielded. How?

Perhaps some reader has been brought to say, "Lord, I will yield to Thee. I see *why* I should yield, and *what* but now tell me *how*." Because salvation from beginning to end is through God's pure grace, He always takes the initiative in bringing us into a fuller experience of our inheritance in Christ. So the Lord Jesus stands outside every unyielded part of your life and knocks and waits for your response. He wishes to come in and fellowship with you in every part of your spiritual life but in between the knocking and the entering something must take place, for Christ never forces entrance. If He enters, the door must be opened.

Rev. 3: 20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: *if any man hear my voice, and open the door,* I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Yielding to Christ is a *definite* act. It is not a mere expression of a pious desire but it is the declaration of a purposeful determination. It is not an oft-repeated wish but it is a decisive act of the will. To yield is to acknowledge Christ's claim to the perfect possession, complete control and unhindered use of one's whole being and then to act upon such an acknowledgment by a definite surrender of it to Him. Desire becomes decision and decision crystallizes into action.

In *A Memorial of a True Life* by Dr. R. E. Speer is recorded such a definite act of surrender by Hugh Beaver, a young man of rare spirituality whose life was very marvellously used among college students in a few brief years of service before God called him Home.

"*Kutztown, Pa., Nov. 16, 1895.*

"'Just as I am,—Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.'

This 16th day of November 1895, I, Hugh Beaver, do of my own free will give myself, all that I am and have, entirely, unreservedly, unqualifiedly to Him, whom having not seen I love, on whom, though now I see Him not, I believe. Bought with a price, I give myself to Him who at the cost of His own blood purchased me. Now committing myself to Him who is able to guard me from stumbling and to set me before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, I trust myself to Him for all things, to be used as He shall see fit where He shall see fit. Sealed by the Holy Spirit, filled with the peace of God that passeth understanding, to Him be all glory, world without end. Amen.

Phil. 4: 19. HUGH BEAVER."

Have you by such a definite decisive act of the will yielded yourself, all that you are, and all that you have, to the Lord Jesus? If not, will you not close this book for a moment and do it now?

Yielding to Christ is a *voluntary* act. We do not yield because we have to but because we want to. It

is not a matter of coercion but of consecration. The Lord Jesus stands outside the door of that unyielded portion of your life and knocks but He will not force an entrance. It would mean very little indeed to be allowed to enter if He did not find fellowship and comradeship with the one within. It is Love that desires to enter but unless Love is met by love the entrance would bring heartache rather than joy. "What fragrance is to the rose, colour to the sunset sky, spotlessness to the falling snow, voluntariness is to the surrender of the life." Of His own free will He joyously, gladly lay down His life for us. With a smile and a song He wants us to open the door to Him.

Yielding to Christ is a *final* act. Such a yielding of the life as we have been considering is irreversible; it need not be repeated. If it has been done honestly it is for time and eternity. Great perplexity of heart has come to countless souls over this matter of repeated surrender so let us be clear as to what has been done and then we shall see how irrevocable the act has been.

Through yielding to Christ we have acknowledged that we are not our own and we have transferred the ownership of our life from self to Christ. Henceforth the life is no longer ours. A re-surrender implies that the transfer had not been honestly made.

Of course one does not know all that is involved in this initial act of surrender or all that it will require of one. When you begin to live only and wholly for God there will be constant revelations of portions of the life still virtually held by self as its own possession.

The heart will be made conscious of unwillingness to relinquish certain rights and privileges so long enjoyed. What, then, must one do as these revelations come? Does one need to make a surrender of the life over again? No, that was done once for all. Simply say, "Lord, this thing which I am still claiming and holding as my own was *part* of that *whole* which I yielded to Thee. It, too, belonged in that initial surrender. I thank Thee for Thy faithfulness in showing me that it is unyielded and just now I give it into Thy possession and place it under Thy control."

There is an *initial act* of yielding that is to be followed by a *continuous attitude* so that as we come to know God and His will better through daily communion we yield instantly to Him any unyielded place or thing. Some one has tersely said, "Surrender is a crisis that develops into a process."

May I use a very homely illustration? A man and woman through mutual faith and love yield themselves to each other in marriage. Neither of them knows then all that is involved in this surrender to each other. The wife knew that her time must be given to making the home but she had not realized how little opportunity would be left for the things she had formerly done. She rebels and uses time for things which necessitates neglect of home duties. Misunderstanding and estrangement follow. Or the husband knew that money would be required to care for his wife and supply the needs of the home but he did not know what extravagant tastes she had nor what a poor manager she was. So he has to use money he wished to

spend on his business or his own pleasure. He rebels and trouble ensues. What do this husband and wife do? Do they remarry each time such a misunderstanding or disagreement comes? Even the idea is absurd. If they are sensible and truly love each other they will acknowledge that there was more in the marriage vows than they realized at the time; each will recognize that all, not a part, was given in the mutual surrender and each will be willing to yield unselfishly and gladly to whatever makes for their mutual interest and welfare. Happy and harmonious married life demands not only an initial act of yielding but a continuous attitude of yielding.

We who have loved the Lord and believed in Him are united to Him. "Ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, *that ye should be married to another,* even to him who is raised from the dead." But no one of us ever knew when we entered into oneness with Christ all that would be involved in such a union. But as we live with Him we learn more of His desires, His will, His purposes, His plans, and we see many things in our life contrary to these. This does not, however, necessitate another surrender but only an instantaneous yielding of the thing to Him.

From the human standpoint the first condition for a life lived on the highest plane is the definite, voluntary, final yielding of the life to Christ as Lord. The primary requirement for the fulness of the Holy Spirit has been met. "When we surrender our *sins* and believe *we receive* the Holy Spirit; when we surrender our *lives* and believe, we are *filled* with the Holy Spirit.

The *receiving* of the Spirit is God's answer to *repentance* and faith; the *fulness* of the Spirit is God's answer to *surrender* and faith. At *conversion* the Spirit enters; at *surrender* the Spirit, *already entered*, takes *full possession*. The supreme human condition of the fulness of the Spirit is a life wholly surrendered to God to do His will." *

I once visited a college to conduct evangelistic meetings. I was entertained in a home in which the guest-room was over the kitchen and was approached by an outside stairway. Very soon my trunk arrived. I was alone in the house. As it was raining very hard, I decided to have the trunk put into the downstairs. I started to open one door but could not—it was locked. I went to another door as there were three in a row, and put my hand on the knob to open it but could not—it too was locked. I tried the third door but with no better success—it also was locked.

Suddenly seized with a strange sense of aloneness I rushed upstairs to the little back-room guest chamber —the only place in the house I was expected to use. To be a bit more conscious of the warm, living, loving presence of my Christ I kneeled by the bedside to pray. Instantly He spoke to me, saying, "Do you not know that is the way thousands of people treat Me? They invite Me into their lives and then they put Me away in a little back guest chamber and there they expect Me to stay. But I long to enter into every room of their lives and share all their experiences."

* *The Threefold Secret of the Holy Spirit*, J. H. McConkey, page 43.

Oh! my friends, where have *you* put the Lord Jesus Christ in your life? Have *you* any locked doors? Have you put Him away in some little hidden corner and given Him no freedom in your life? Has He longed to get into the social hall of your life where all your pleasures are? Has He put His nail-pierced hand on the door, longing to enter, but could not—for it is locked from the inside? Has He wanted to enter into the room where your business was carried on and share in both its projects and profits? Has He been denied entrance because shady, crooked practises went on there which His all seeing eye would detect? Has He longed to enter into the room where life plans were being shaped and to help in the fashioning of them? And He tried the door but entrance was denied —locked from the inside? And has He who longs to fill and to bless you gone back to His little upstairs back room with a grieved and sorrowful heart?

I went from that college town to another. My hostess there was a dear widow. Her home was very humble. We ate in the kitchen but oh! such hospitality I have seldom enjoyed. Every good thing which her frugal means would permit her to provide she had for me. The first day she said to me, "Miss Paxson, my home is very humble but while you are here it is all yours. Go where you want to and do just what you want to—just make yourself at home." And I, who travelled constantly, oh! how I spread out over that whole house and made it mine the few days I was there!

Oh! friends, is the Lord Jesus living within you?

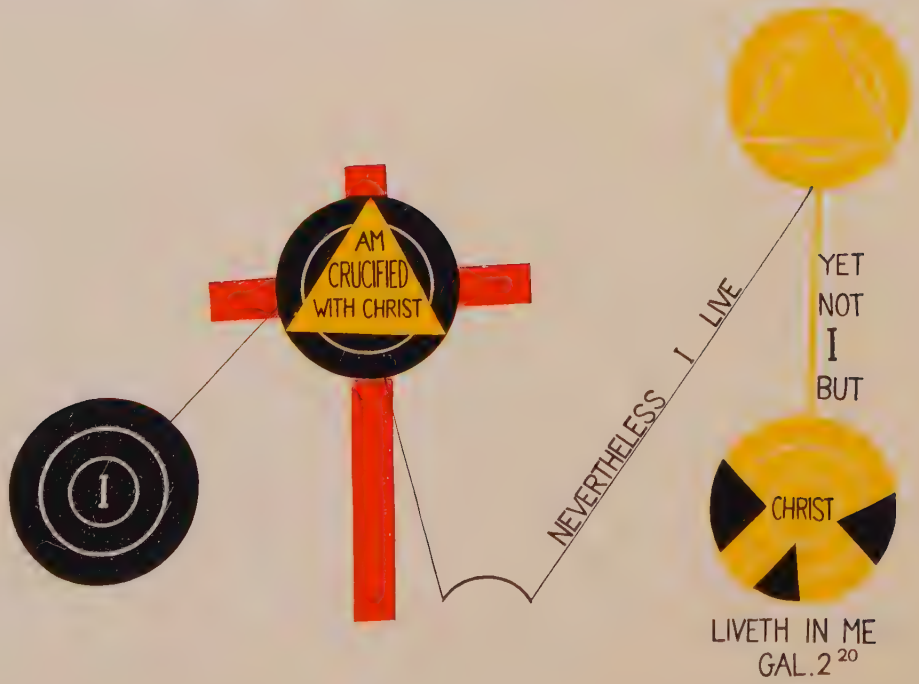


DIAGRAM XII

THE UNYIELDED LIFE

Have you ever said to Him, "Lord Jesus, I have only a very simple life to offer you as a dwelling place but while you are here *it is all yours*. Go where you want to, do what you want to—*just make yourself at home!*" He waits for just such an invitation. How quickly He will accept it when once honestly offered and how He will spread out over the whole life—truly making Himself at home. If you have not unlocked all the doors from the inside and given Him a gracious and glad invitation to enter, will you do so to-day? *

"I believe on the name of the
Son of God,
Therefore I am in Him:
Having redemption through His blood
And life through His Spirit.
And He is in me, and all fulness is in Him.
To Him I belong
By purchase: conquest and self-surrender.
To me He belongs for all my hourly need.
There is no cloud between my Lord and me.
There is no difficulty inward or outward, that
He is not ready to meet in me to-day.
The Lord is my keeper."

*Diagram XII.

IV

THE BELIEVER'S PART IN BECOMING SPIRIT-FILLED

Faith

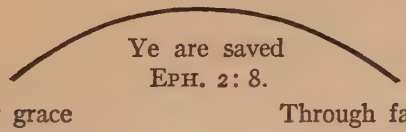
IT may be some reader is saying "As far as I know I have yielded my life unconditionally to Christ yet I have not the life more abundant which He came to bring. There are still the evident marks of the carnal Christian. Is it possible for one to be yielded and still not be filled with the Holy Spirit?" The emptied life must be filled and waits for faith to claim the fulness.

S. D. Gordon tells of a little girl who was praying and who said, "Jesus, I hear you knocking at the door of my heart. Come in Jesus!" Then rising from her knees she said, "He's in!" Surrender, kneeling at the foot of the Cross, says, "Lord, I am not my own; I yield myself unto Thee; I present my body a living sacrifice." Faith, looking up to the ascended Lord at the Father's right hand, says, "Christ liveth in me; to me to live is Christ." Surrender says, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Faith says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Surrender opens the door; faith believes that Christ enters, fills, abides. You may have crowned Him Lord and yet not have appropriated Him as Life.

"And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." The spiritual man is one full of faith.

Faith is the Complement of Grace.

Did you ever see a perfect rainbow? Looking out over the ocean I once saw distinctly both ends of a rainbow coming up out of the water, as it were, and forming an unbroken arch. Through this beautiful symbol the Holy Spirit interpreted to me a passage of Scripture which revealed the place of faith in the Christian's life in a new and telling way.



"And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

God's arch of salvation is all of grace and it is all of faith. From the Godward side it is all of grace; from the manward side it is all of faith. God's grace is always perfect and its work is clear and distinct. But oh! how imperfect is man's faith. Grace has provided in Christ Jesus all that is needed for man's salvation even unto a life of habitual spirituality. But such a life cannot become experimental until faith appropriates in full the provision of God's grace in Christ. Faith is the complement of grace.

Rom. 4: 16, "*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.*"

With no exception everything in the Christian's life is a gift. Grace gives and faith takes. "Faith is man's one activity." Faith must reach up and lay hold upon all that grace has sent down and bestowed in Christ. Grace provides: faith possesses.

This truth stands out crystal clear in the history of the children of Israel. As an outright gift the land of Canaan with its manifold accompanying blessings had been bestowed upon them. It *was* theirs through promise years before they ever saw it. God constantly spoke of it as theirs. Yet it was not to be actually in their possession until the soles of their feet trod upon it. Faith must enter in and possess the gift already bestowed in promise.

JOSH. 1: 2–3, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore *arise, go over this Jordan,* thou, and all this people, *unto the land which I do give to them,* even to the children of Israel.

Every place that the sole of *your foot shall tread upon,* that *have I given you, as I said* unto Moses."

JOSH. 1: 11, "Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals: for within three days ye shall pass over Jordan, *to go in to possess the land,* which the Lord your *God giveth you to possess it.*"

Furthermore the children of Israel might have entered this land of promise forty years earlier. God led them up to the very border line of this rich, fertile, beautiful country flowing with milk and honey and laden with fruits. But they turned away *through unbelief,* suffered forty years of weary wanderings, and

died in the wilderness. Only the two men of faith, Caleb and Joshua, possessed their inheritance.

HEB. 3: 17–19, "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but *to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*"

My Christian friend, everything you need for life on the highest plane has been given you in Christ. God has bestowed upon you also the Holy Spirit who already indwells you and whose chief task is to make you spiritual. Life on the highest plane is already yours. God hath given you every spiritual blessing in Christ. But this life with all its accompanying blessings can only be actualized through faith. Your faith must make experimental what grace has made possible.

EPH. 1: 3, R. V., "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing* in the heavenly places in Christ."

MATT. 9: 28–30, "And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* They said unto him, *Yea, Lord.*

Then touched he their eyes, saying, *According to your faith be it unto you.* And their eyes were opened."

Perhaps through hunger and thirst or through the remembrance of God's gracious promises or through sheer desperation because of your wilderness wander-

ings you have come up to the border line of the promised land again and again. It may even be that you have essayed to go to a Keswick or to a Victorious Life Conference to spy out the land, to see if the life was all it promised to be, above all to see " if it works." In the lives of some you met or to whom you listened who are yielded, full-of-faith ones you have seen marvellous clusters of the fruit of the Spirit, " love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control." Yes, you are convinced the life is all that the Bible purports it to be and you have seen it " work " but—but—but *there are giants in the land.* The world, the flesh and the devil loomed large before you and you said, " Greater is he that is in the world than He that is in me." Through unbelief you turned back again into the weariness, the restlessness and the powerlessness of a carnal life.

Dear friend, does this message find you there to-day, grieving God, rejoicing Satan and robbing yourself? Then it comes as God's own command to you, " Arise, go over this Jordan; go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it." Cease grieving your God: possess your possessions in Christ through faith.

Whether young or old in the Christian life there is but one way in which our spiritual possessions are actualized—by faith. Faith opens the Christian life to us: faith accompanies us the entire length of life's journey, and faith at last leads us into the land where we see Him as He is and there faith gives place to sight.

COL. 2: 5–6, "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of *your faith in Christ*. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so walk ye in him*."

COL. 1: 23, "*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled*, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister."

Faith opens the door to every blessing that is ours in Christ.

2 TIM. 3: 15, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto *salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*."

We have *access* by faith.

ROM. 5: 2, "By whom also we have *access by faith* into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

We have *sonship* by faith.

GAL. 3: 26, "For ye are all *the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*."

We have *righteousness* by faith.

PHIL. 3: 9, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, *but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*."

We have *forgiveness of sins* and *sanctification* by faith.

Acts 26: 18, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, *that they may receive forgiveness of sins,* and *inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*"

We have *cleansing* by faith.

Acts 15: 9, "And put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith.*"

We have *Christ's indwelling* by faith.

Eph. 3: 17, "That *Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.*"

We *receive the Holy Spirit* by faith.

Gal. 3: 2, "This only would I learn of you, *Received ye the Spirit* by the works of the law, or *by the hearing of faith?*"

We *inherit the promises* by faith.

Heb. 6: 12, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of *them who through faith* and patience *inherit the promises.*"

We have *victory over the world* by faith.

1 JOHN 5: 4, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and *this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith.*"

We have *victory over the evil one* by faith.

EPH. 6: 16, R. V., "Withal *taking up the shield of faith,* wherewith ye shall be able *to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.*"

We have *victory over circumstances and difficulties* by faith.

HEB. 11: 33–34, "Who *through faith* subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, *obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,*

Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

We are *kept* through faith.

1 PET. 1: 5, "*Who are kept by the power of God through faith,* unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

MATT. 21: 21–22, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, *If ye have faith,* and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, *whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing,* ye shall receive."

We have *power* through faith.

MATT. 17: 19–20, "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could we not cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, *Because of your unbelief:* for verily I say unto you, *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye* shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and *nothing shall be impossible unto you.*"

Two things are absolutely essential to a harmonious relationship with God, we must believe that *God is* and that *God does*. Apart from these two fundamental convictions there is no salvation and no blessing.

HEB. 11: 6, "But *without faith it is impossible to please him:* for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Some of Christ's severest rebukes were to unbelief in His disciples. To have His presence, His words, His works fail to inspire faith grieved the Lord Jesus exceedingly. Even though the tempest raged and the waves dashed high and He were asleep—yet *He* was there and why should they fear? Fear and faith are incompatible.

MATT. 8: 26, "And he saith unto them, *why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."

Again even though the wind were boisterous and though Peter did begin to sink yet the Lord of the sea had *said* "Come." The power of His protection

accompanied the command, then why should Peter doubt? Doubt and faith are irreconcilable.

MATT. 14: 31, "And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*"

The disciples misunderstood the Master's warning concerning the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. But there was a far deeper misapprehension of the Lord Jesus Himself in their hearts. They had forgotten to take bread when they went to the other side of the lake and they were very evidently worrying over where and how they would get their next meal. So when He spoke to them of the leaven of the Pharisees they said, "He sees our predicament that we have no bread." Oh! what if they had forgotten their bread? Did they not have with them the One who had satisfied the hunger of five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, and had twelve baskets to spare? And had they not just come from seeing Him feed more than four thousand people with seven loaves and a few fishes with seven baskets left over? Would He not be equal to furnishing an evening meal for the twelve of them if need be? Worry and faith cannot dwell together.

MATT. 16: 8–9, "Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, *O ye of little faith why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?* Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five

thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? "

Oh! how we crowd Him out of our lives by that triumvirate of evil—fear, doubt and worry! Failing health, financial losses, waywardness of children, overwhelming burdens, tempests of affliction and adversity, storms of passion from within or of persecution from without—and we become insensible to His presence, we doubt His Word and we forget His works.

A young woman came to me one day to unburden her heart. Spirit and body were both wearied to the point of utter exhaustion. Her face was inexpressibly worn and haggard; furrows of care had left their tracks in her forehead. Life was hard almost beyond the point of endurance because of burdens, cares, worries and work. A tempest was raging in her own soul, her ship was covered with waves and Christ seemed asleep. But He heard her cry of distress and responded. He commanded the waves of worry to cease saying, " In nothing be anxious," and besought the calm of peace to enter her soul through praise, " In everything give thanks."

HAB. 3: 17, 18, " Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; *Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*"

Some of Christ's sweetest words of commendation

were called forth by faith in Him and strange to say they were usually spoken to those who had had the opportunity to know Him the least. A centurion came in person to appeal to the Lord to heal his servant. Christ quickly responded with a promise to go to him. But faith answered, "Lord, *speak the word only* and my servant shall be healed." Oh! the joy such faith brought to Jesus' heart, and the commendation came from His lips, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

There is no record in God's Word and no instance in human experience where grace and love have failed to respond to faith and trust. God would be untrue to the very essence of His nature which is love and to the very heart of His work which is grace if He failed even once to respond to real faith. Whoever will come to Jesus Christ saying, "If thou wilt, thou canst," will surely hear Him say, "I will."

In the new sphere in Christ into which the believer enters the very atmosphere is grace. To carry the life-giving and life-sustaining qualities of that atmosphere into the inner life the Christain need only use the lungs of faith. As a new-born babe begins life in its new sphere by breathing the air that is all about it as a free gift and as it lives and grows by continued respirations, so the new-born child of God begins life in Christ by taking Him as God's gift of grace by faith and he "grows up into Christ in all things" by the continued appropriation of Him through faith. Faith and nothing but faith avails for us to receive the gifts and graces of our ascended Lord.

GAL. 5: 6, "For *in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith* which worketh by love."

In Christ we stand by faith; we walk by faith; we live by faith.

2 COR. 1: 24, "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for *by faith ye stand.*"

2 COR. 5: 7, "For *we walk by faith,* not by sight."

HEB. 10: 38, "Now *the just shall live by faith,* but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

Perhaps the thought of a life of such complete and continuous faith appalls us and we doubt its possibility. Yet such faith is the simplest thing in the world. Its very simplicity is its chief difficulty to most people. Faith is looking unto Jesus Christ and taking Him at His Word. Faith in itself has no power whatsoever to save or to keep us: it merely links us to the Christ who has that power. Just as grace had a definite method in giving so faith has a definite method in receiving. Let us study some of the operations of faith.

Faith Rests on God's Foundation.

The whole superstructure of spiritual experience is built upon a solid and unmovable foundation because it is built upon Jesus Christ Himself.

1 COR. 3: 11, "For other *foundation* can no man lay than that is laid, *which is Jesus Christ.*"

1 PET. 2: 6, "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect,

precious: and *he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*"

Christ Jesus Himself is " the way, the truth and the life." Christ crucified, risen, ascended and exalted is God's foundation. Faith is the cable that connects and transmits the Life of the ascended Lord in Heaven to the believer on earth.

Can we not rest our faith on such a foundation? Is there any danger of it disintegrating? In His earthly life were all the forces of Satan ever able to overcome Him? From the Cross did He not assure us that full salvation had been wrought out for us and that the work was finished? Did not His resurrection prove His victory over every foe? Is He not living to-day in countless lives as Conqueror, as Life? Upon the triumphant, omnipotent, living, present Christ our faith rests.

Some have made shipwreck of faith because they have built upon the sand of human opinion and speculation rather than upon the rock foundation of God's revealed truth. They have believed certain things *about* Christ but they have not believed *on* Christ Himself. Christ does not act as a guide-post to point out a way of salvation. He Himself is the Way. Christ does not teach principles of truth by which an unregenerate life may be guided and governed from without but Himself is the Truth to be lived out from within. Christ does not show us " a way of life " but He Himself enters to become the Life of our life. God's foundation for a spiritual life is the glorious

Person and the gracious work of His crucified, risen, ascended, exalted Son and whosoever rests full-length upon Him for salvation and sanctification will surely become spiritual.

> "On Christ the solid rock I stand;
> All other ground is sinking sand."

Again we may fall into unbelief, doubt and disappointment because we have pinned our faith to a blessing and the blessing is lost; or to an experience and the experience vanishes; or to a person and the person fails. But true faith rests not upon a blessing, however great; or upon an experience, however deep; but upon Him through whom they came; nor does it rest upon any human exponent of victory, however sincere, but upon the Victor. "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded."

Faith is Rooted in God's great Facts.

Walking along a wooded path in the mountains of Switzerland I saw an interesting tree. On a steep slope was a tall, stately pine tree with a huge boulder lodged right underneath it lifting the main trunk five or six feet from the ground. The tree was fairly sitting on top of this rock yet it shot straight upwards fifty feet or more. Even the winter blasts had not deflected it an iota. How could such a position be maintained with such a handicap? The secret was not hidden from our view. The roots of the tree had spread themselves over that rock and had gone down, deep, deep into the rich earth around so that even the boul-

der lodged at its very heart could not overturn or overwhelm it.

What a lesson it spoke! What a symbol it was! Afflictions, adversities, sufferings, sorrows, temptations, trials, doubts, disappointments roll in upon us during our pilgrim journey and lodge at the very heart of us. How then can we go on in peace, patience, power, joy and victory? Are such things not enough to overwhelm one? No, not if faith spreads itself out over them and roots itself in the great facts of God. What are some of these eternal facts which furnish faith rich soil in which to root itself? First of all:

God is love.

1 John 4: 8, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for *God is love.*"

It may seem as though God had utterly forsaken and forgotten you or as though His hand of chastening were too heavy upon you. It may seem as though He had closed His eyes and deafened His ear. It may even seem as though He were indifferent altogether to the burden you carry and the heartache you endure. But it is not so for God is love and the love of God shines as the brightness of the sun whether you are warmed and refreshed by its rays or not.

God's grace is sufficient.

2 Cor. 12: 9, "And he said unto me, *My grace is sufficient for thee:* for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

There will be temptations but none for which God has not provided a way of escape. Trials will assail; God nowhere promises freedom from them but He does promise endurance to bear them. When our weakness is most pressing His strength is most perfect.

Christ is able to save to the uttermost.

HEB. 7: 25, "*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost* that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Has the boulder of doubt rolled in upon you? Look upon the rich soil into which your faith may root itself. If you have come to God through Christ it is a fact that Christ has borne your sins and has forgiven and forgotten them; He has put away your sin and has not only removed its penalty but has freed you from its power; He has overcome the world; He has defeated the devil; He lives in Heaven as your Great High Priest, your Conqueror, your Advocate, your Intercessor to cleanse you from sin and to keep you from sinning. Then spread the roots of faith over every doubt and let them go deep into these great facts of salvation.

Christ Jesus is in you, and you and Christ are one.

COL. 1: 27, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is *Christ in you,* the hope of glory."

JOHN 15: 5, "I am the vine: ye are the branches."

Whether you are conscious of His presence or not

He is there not as a temporary guest or as One who comes and goes according to our spiritual moods but He is there as an abiding One. We may neglect Him, we may forget Him still He is there. He may be cabined in some back room but if we have ever truly opened the door to Him He is there and into this precious fact He would have faith root itself.

You are God's child and heir.

Rom. 8: 16–17, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that *we are the children of God.* And if children, then heirs; *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;* if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together with him."

You may feel far more like a prodigal and a pauper than like a child and an heir. But if you have put your faith in Christ as your Saviour, you are in God's family and the wealth of the King is yours. God would have your faith spread its roots over all depression caused by failure and go deep down into the soil of the riches of grace in Christ Jesus.

You are complete in Christ.

Your life may be immature in experience but God sees you complete in Christ. Your "old man" has been crucified, you have been baptized into Christ's death and identified with Him in His burial and resurrection. You are now hid with Christ in God and so you are complete in Him. Has the boulder of discouragement over your lack of growth into Christlikeness settled down upon you? Over your coldness of heart and times of apathy? Then spread the roots

of faith over it and let them go down into this great and glorious fact that you are complete in Him.

COL. 2: 10, "And *ye are complete in him,* which is the head of all principality and power."

You are seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

You may never once have availed yourself of the privileges, possessions and powers of your heavenly position yet it is a fact, nevertheless, that, if you have trusted Christ as your Saviour, you thereby are seated with Him in the heavenlies. The powers of evil may be attacking your spirit, soul and body but they will be unable to overturn or overwhelm you if you spread the roots of faith over them and let them go down into the soil of this peerless truth.

EPH. 2: 6, "And *hath* raised us up together, and *made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*"

The Holy Spirit dwells within you.

You may feel that you are left to live the Christian life alone and the weight of this responsibility may rest like a great boulder upon your heart. But you are not left alone. "Another Comforter" who is just like the ascended Lord in Heaven lives within you. Spread the roots of faith over all fear and unbelief and let them sink deep down into the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1 COR. 3: 16, "*Know ye not* that ye are the temple of God, and *that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

When the Christian's faith roots itself in these great, eternal facts of God and abides there he becomes spiritual. Faith quietly *accepts* these facts as true and *acts* as though they were, then no matter what rolls in upon the life to overturn it, it remains steadfast and true and shoots heavenward in its growth into the likeness of Christ.

Look upon the boulders that rolled one after another against the life of the Apostle Paul which it would seem might have crushed out his very life.

2 Cor. 11: 24–28, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,

Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Yet his faith spread itself over all these perils and persecutions, testings and trials and rooted itself in the great, eternal facts of God's grace and love, thus enabling him to grow up to magnificent spiritual stature.

But Paul's life was exceptional you say. He was the giant tree in the forest. There are few who ever have a faith such as his. In the far interior of China was a young missionary who was betrothed. The

wedding day drew near; all preparations for it were made. Then word came that her lover was ill. A long three days' journey stretched between her and her loved one living alone. Down upon that woman's heart rolled a terrific boulder of sorrow. Absolutely alone she watched the life of the one dearest to her on earth flicker out, with her own hands she prepared the body for burial, made the coffin, and laid him away to rest, herself conducting the funeral service. Then she turned to the road that led her back to live and toil alone for the rest of her life in the Master's vineyard. Rebellious? Embittered? No, sweetened, enriched with greater tenderness, love and devotion. But how could it be? The roots of faith had spread out over that terrible sorrow and had gone down, down, deep, deep into the facts of God's unchanging love, imperishable goodness and exhaustless grace.

Faith Reckons on God's Faithfulness.

Our faith may falter but His faithfulness never. Peter failed Christ oh! so miserably that three times over he could deny his Lord. But the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to Peter remained unshaken. The heavenly Father cannot forget His promises nor can He deny Himself by failing to keep them.

Ps. 89: 33, "Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, *nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*"

2 Tim. 2: 13, R. V., "*If we are faithless, he abideth faithful;* for he cannot deny himself."

We may even be ready to give up in defeat to the enemy or to lay down our task in sheer discourage-

ment. We may be on the point of taking our hand from the plough and turning back. But Christ is not discouraged; He will not give up; He acknowledges no victory on the devil's part. He has called us into fellowship with Himself; He has owned us as His possession and has assumed the responsibility for our control and He will not lay it aside. What He has begun in us He will continue. His work in us does not depend upon our love for Him but on His love for us: not faith in our faith but faith in His faithfulness is what He wants from us.

PHIL. 1: 6, "*Being confident* of this very thing, *that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it* until the day of Jesus Christ."

1 THESS. 5: 24, "*Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*"

I watched two young girls cross a glacier. The path was not clearly marked out, there were great gaping holes in the ice, often the next step had to be fairly cut out. They were not even properly shod with spiked shoes. Yet they tripped along apparently unafraid and in safety because they were roped to one who knew how to avoid the dangers and surmount the difficulties of that icy path and they reckoned on the faithfulness of their guide.

How much more can we reckon upon the faithfulness of our Guide who knows the way before us and whose business it is to lead us safely through all its dangers and difficulties. Our Guide delights to have us throw away all props and helps; to let go of every-

thing outside of Himself and then cast ourselves full length upon His unfailing faithfulness. "Sarah received power . . . since she counted Him faithful that promised."

Faith Receives God's Fulness.

Are you a child of God? Then by virtue of your sonship you may be filled with the Holy Spirit. Such fulness has been promised to you and it has been provided for you. Then why is it that you do not possess your birthright?

There are several ways for an honest man to gain possession of a thing; he may buy it, he may barter for it, or he may receive it as a gift.

Can one buy the fulness of the Holy Spirit? Simon the sorcerer thought in his heart to purchase Him and the power to confer Him upon others for which he was severely rebuked. Can His fulness be secured through barter? Have you perchance tried to strike a bargain with God offering Him some odd moments of time, some remnants of strength, some segment of talent, in exchange for the fulness of the Holy Spirit? The rich young ruler would no doubt have exchanged *half* his possessions for the life more abundant, but he went away sorrowful. One way remains by which you may possess the Holy Spirit's fulness. It is the gift of God.

1 JOHN 3: 24, "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, *by the Spirit which he hath given us.*"

What does one usually do with a gift? He receives it and thanks the giver. This is precisely what God

wants you to do with this wondrous gift of the Holy Spirit's fulness. Let me illustrate by a simple incident which brought this message to my own heart with fresh meaning and power.

A dear young Chinese girl came one evening to seek the way of salvation. That night she not only received Christ as Saviour but yielded to Him as Lord. Immediately she was filled with a passion to win to Christ the young man to whom she was betrothed. He was utterly godless. After months of intercession, personal work and, above all, exemplifying Christ in daily life before him she won him to Christ. A marvellous miracle of renewal and transformation was wrought in him. He became a new creation in Christ.

Nearly two years later Mr. and Mrs. Wang were passing through Shanghai and they came to call. Their time was limited and Mr. Wang did not want to waste one moment of it. So as soon as the introduction was over he began conversation upon the theme nearest to his heart—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh! how precious Christ was to that young man! What a reality prayer was. Out of every hour of the day he spent at least five minutes in prayer. What a passion he had for souls! He could not sleep at night if he had not made at least an effort to win some one to Christ during the day. What a love for the Word of God he had! It was his meat and drink.

Seeing his love for God's Word I was reminded of a Scofield Bible which had been sent me to give to a Chinese friend. I presented it to Mr. Wang saying, "I see you love the Bible. Here is a Scofield Bible

which I should like to give you." At the mention of a Scofield Bible his face grew radiant and the tears of joy filled his eyes. "Oh," said he, "the other day I saw a Scofield Bible in Nanking and how I have wanted to possess one ever since! I began to pray for one. I went to a store to buy one. It cost too much, I couldn't afford it. I had decided I couldn't possess one."

Remember the three ways of gaining possession. Mr. Wang had tried to buy the Bible and it cost too much; no one had offered to exchange one for anything he had. Just one way of possession was open to him—to receive it as a gift. And now the Scofield Bible which he so much desired was being offered to him as a gift. What did he do?

Did he say, "Oh! I want that Bible more than I want any other thing but *I haven't prayed long enough for it*—just wait until I pray a few months more for it!" Or did he say, "*I am really not worthy* to receive that Bible! I must wait until I have made myself a better Christian and am worthy to possess such a Bible!" Or did he reply, "*This Bible is coming too easily*—just receiving it as a gift! I think I should strive harder to get one for myself for I haven't done a thing to merit such a gift." Or did he say, "Oh, that Scofield Bible is what I want and need more than anything else but *it is not for me!* God might give my wife such a gift but not me!" Or did he say, "You say that Bible is for me but *I do not feel that it is mine* so I think I should not take it until I *feel* I possess it!"

If Mr. Wang had made any one of those foolish, absurd remarks I should have been forced to one of two conclusions; either that he was not honest and really did not want a Scofield Bible or else he thought I was not honest and did not really offer that one to him. One of these two conclusions is inescapable.

What did Mr. Wang do? Well, I wish you could have seen the quickness with which he held out his two hands and TOOK that Scofield Bible and with a face all aglow with joy and gratitude he immediately kneeled down and thanked God. As he rose to his feet he began to talk of how he would use that gift in winning men to the Lord Jesus.

Have you wanted the fulness of the Holy Spirit? God offers Him in His fulness to you as a gift. What have you done with the offer? Are you still praying for the Holy Spirit's fulness? If so, what do you expect to accomplish through your prayers? The deposit is already placed to your account in the bank. You are still pleading with God to put it there while He pleads with you to cash your checks. "You keep telegraphing to God for supplies, and every year your appeals get more plaintive and piteous; you do not realize that the freight train is already in the station, waiting for you to discharge it; that the heavily-burdened ship is in the dock, ready for you to unload."

Or you say, "I am not worthy to be filled with the Holy Spirit" and "I dare not expect Him to fill me until I am a better Christian." Of course you are not worthy to have the Holy Spirit dwell in you much less fill you. Neither was Paul, nor Peter, nor

Spurgeon, nor Moody, worthy in themselves to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's gift of grace and grace is pure, unmerited favour. Grace is not something God does because of anything that He finds worthy in us but because of the infinite worth of His Son. The only thing you can do to make yourself worthy of the Holy Spirit's fulness is to take Him as God's proffered gift and let Him make your life a fit and worthy place for His abiding.

Or do you say, "Just receiving the gifts of God's grace is too easy and lazy a way to live the Christian life. I think I ought to work a bit myself and strive to attain to a holy life. I do not like the idea of sitting passive and having spiritual blessings bestowed upon me." This sounds commendable but it runs counter to one of the greatest truths revealed in God's Word concerning faith. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." There is not a ray of encouragement held out in God's Word to the man who strives to attain spirituality through his own self-effort. There are those who know that salvation cannot be secured by works but who think that spirituality may be so obtained. They know they can't be *saved* by works but they strive to *grow* by works. We do grow *in* spirituality by faith but we can never grow *into* spirituality by self-effort. Growth is "not of works lest any man should boast." "Ye can not by taking thought add one cubit to your stature." Making good resolutions, signing pledges, practising self-denial during certain seasons, and all such self-

manufactured methods of obtaining spirituality, will prove futile. If we could grow into holiness through any effort of our own how proud we should become and how independent of God.

Or you say, "Such a standard of spiritual life is too high for the ordinary everyday Christian. It may be possible for the minister or the missionary but it is beyond my reach." Yes, it is beyond the reach of everything in you except your faith. But so long as God says, "All things are possible to him that believeth," the fulness of the Holy Spirit is possible to faith. God has no favourites and, what He offers to one believer, He offers to every believer irrespective of his calling or vocation.

Or you say, "I have been a Christian for years and I have never *felt* the presence of the Holy Spirit in me. Then how can I believe He will fill me? If I just felt He was dwelling within me, I would have faith to believe in His infilling." Your order then is feeling, faith, fact, which is the exact reverse of God's order. God says, "Fact, faith, feeling." We are ever prone to trust our feelings rather than God's facts and it is like having the roots of faith going down into quicksand. The state of the weather, the state of our health, the state of our pocketbook, these and countless other variable conditions may affect our feelings. To place any confidence whatever in them is exceedingly disastrous. God would have you say, "It is a fact that the Holy Spirit dwells within me for God's Word says so. It is a fact that God wants me filled with the Spirit because He commands me to be filled and He has provided

for that fulness. Therefore by faith I claim the fulness of the Holy Spirit." Whatever feeling God wishes to accompany or follow this act of faith will come in His own time and way.

So, my friend, if you are coming to God telling Him that you long to be filled with the Holy Spirit and yet saying any of these foolish things, either you are not honest and really do not want to be filled with the Holy Spirit or else you do not believe He is honest when He offers you the gift of the Spirit's fulness.

Are you honest? Do you truly want to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Then acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit within you; thank God that He is there; and claim His fulness as your birthright. Take the gift, thank the Giver, and use the gift immediately in winning souls to Christ.

By an act of faith I receive the Spirit's fulness. By a constant succession of acts of faith, the Spirit's fulness becomes habitual. "Let me ask you to remember that there is no such thing as a once-for-all fulness; it is a continuous appropriation of a continuous supply from Jesus Christ Himself:—a moment-by-moment faith in a moment-by-moment Saviour for a moment-by-moment cleansing, and a moment-by-moment filling. As I trust Him, He fills me; so long as I trust Him He fills me, the moment I begin to believe, that moment I begin to receive; and so long as I keep believing, praise the Lord! so long I keep receiving."

V

THE BELIEVER'S PART IN REMAINING SPIRIT-FILLED

Obedience

IN response to surrender and faith the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit. As he is emptied of self, God fills; as he takes of Christ, God gives. Becoming rightly related to the Holy Spirit he becomes spiritual. In him the Spirit dwells in fulness because over him He has unhindered control. But the matter cannot be left there for many a person has been filled with the Holy Spirit who has not remained filled and life on the highest plane presumes habitual fulness of the Holy Spirit.

A Step lengthens into a Walk.

Surrender and faith as antecedents in becoming Spirit-filled were both acts. By an act of yielding one takes the step out of a life ruled by self into one governed by Christ. By an act of faith one claims his birthright in the fulness of the Holy Spirit and steps out of a life of stagnancy into one of satisfaction and sufficiency.

To many this step marks such a definite and marvellous advance in spiritual living that it is as noteworthy an event in their spiritual history as was their new birth through faith in Christ as Saviour. The blessing of a life in which Christ is really all and in

all is so transcendent that many stop short with the enjoyment of the blessing and do not seek to know how it is to be maintained. To their disappointment they wake some day to the realization that their peace and power have gone.

The twofold act of surrender and faith to be of any permanent value must become an attitude. The decisive act must be crystallized into continuous action. Surrender and faith must be merged into obedience. Obedience is just surrender and faith stretched over a lifetime; the step is lengthened into a walk.

Scripture speaks often of the believer's walk and means by the word his whole manner of living from Sunday to Sunday, from morning till morning. Our walk is what we are translated into what we do; it is character expressed in conduct. It is our calling in Christ in the heavenlies actualized in conduct before men in the world.

1 THESS. 2: 12, "That *ye would walk worthy of God,* who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."

EPH. 4: 1, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that *ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.*"

To remain spiritual it is of paramount importance that the believer should pay attention to his walk. Let us then study the nature of the walk of a Spirit-filled Christian.

A Walk in Obedience to God's Will.

Obedience is the basic principle in the family life of

God. The Son's incarnate life opened the door into the home life of Heaven and let us see that obedience to the will of the Father is the secret of its happiness and harmony. Indeed Christ said that obedience constitutes the family tie.

MATT. 12: 50, "For *whosoever shall do the will of my Father* which is in heaven, *the same* is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Obedience is likewise the basic principle in the heavenly holy order of which Christ is the Head. To become the Head of the body He was "obedient even unto death" and each member of the body partakes of the fulness of the life He bestows only through obedience to the obedient One. The preciousness and permanence of our abiding in the fellowship of His love is determined by our obedience to His will as He was obedient to His Father's.

HEB. 5: 8–9, "Though he were a Son, yet *learned he obedience by the things* which he suffered; And being made perfect, *he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*"

JOHN 15: 10, "If *ye keep my commandments,* ye shall abide in my love; even as *I have kept my Father's commandments,* and abide in his love."

Obedience is the basic principle in the Kingdom of God. There God's will is everything. The peace, joy, content of Heaven are due to the fact that there God's will is done perfectly. So life in the Kingdom of God is conditioned upon willingness to do His will.

MATT. 6: 10, "Thy kingdom come. *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*"

MATT. 7: 21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of my Father* which is in heaven."

Nothing short of loving obedience can keep us in harmony with God because in His family, His society and His Kingdom, His will is sovereign and supreme.

In yielding his life to God the believer acknowledges that God has a right to expect obedience from him and he accepts God's will as the invariable standard for literally everything in his life. By voluntarily choosing the rule of Christ instead of that of self he places himself in the center of God's will.

Then begins the practice of the will of God in a daily, hourly, moment-by-moment walk. Oh! what a difference there is soon found to be between accepting the will of God in principle and submitting to it in practice. It is one thing by one decisive act to put the hand into God's and say, "Father, I have come to do thy will," and quite another thing to keep it there in the daily walk of life saying, "Father, I delight to do thy will; it is my meat and drink." Through the pressure of some particular need or under the power of some special inspiration the step out of self-will into God's will may be taken without the realization that the step must lengthen into a continued, sustained, habitual walk.

We often make the mistake of thinking that life lived in the will of God means all sunshine and no

storms; that to be filled with the Spirit means exemption from temptation and suffering. But it is not so. A few days ago I started for a walk down a mountain-road. The sun was shining brightly and I anticipated the pure delight of a beautiful sunset over the lake and an unclouded view of the mountains. But before long I walked straight into a rainstorm and for half an hour rain and hail came down upon me. There was nothing to do but walk right on which I did and came out later into the sunshine again. Both the sunshine and the storm were allowed by the Father in Heaven. So we find it in our walk with Him in daily life. Two things are bound to be encountered in a walk in obedience to the will of God; one is the temptations of Satan, and the other the testings of God.

Every step of the walk in the will of God will be contested by the evil one whose own greatest sin is self-will. He seduced God's first man into disobedience and self-will and the persistent attack that he made upon the second Man throughout His earthly life had but one motive back of it—to deflect Him from a walk of implicit obedience to His Father. The Spirit-filled man is now his chief target and the temptation of disobedience is the one fiery dart above all others that he constantly aims at him.

The devil tempts the Spirit-filled man along the line of presumption. He tempts him to go beyond the will of God in the matter of the Spirit's manifestation. He says to him, "If thou be Spirit-filled, then speak in tongues." Many earnest people to-day are being led astray by thinking to prove their reception of the

Spirit's fulness by some outer, visible, spectacular manifestation rather than by His inner supernatural presence in power. In this they go beyond the will of God because they go beyond the Word of God.

Satan tempts also through another form of presumption, to lag behind the will of God. He tempts the Spirit-filled man to rely upon his spiritual attainment and to neglect the study of God's Word for personal growth. Resting in his supposed permanent fulness he begins to live on stale manna; to rely for strength upon his own oft-repeated testimony; to trust in an unconsciously receding experience. More than one Spirit-filled person has lost his fulness by attempting to live off of it without a constant replenishing.

The devil tempts the Spirit-filled man along the line of pride. The Holy Spirit's motto is "Christ everything;" Satan's motto is "Anything but Christ." So he tempts the Spirit-filled man to look away from Christ and to look in unto self. He has achieved a real victory when he gets the Spirit-filled man to rejoice in his fulness and to testify regarding his blessing rather than to rejoice in the Giver of the fulness and to sing praises unto the Blesser. The grave danger of fixing one's eyes upon an experience, however exalted and blessed, instead of upon Him who bestowed it was expressed very tellingly by Spurgeon when he said,

"I looked at Christ
And the dove of peace flew into my heart;
I looked at the dove of peace—
And it flew away."

The one who places such emphasis upon the blessing is very apt to look reproachfully upon those who have not a similar one. He becomes self-righteous and indulges in criticism and Phariseeism. He looks down upon others with a " holier than thou " attitude which is evidence enough of the diminishing fulness of the Holy Spirit.

Satan tempts the Spirit-filled man along the line of persecution. Satan's one purpose is to deflect him from obedience and if he cannot do it by pressure from within he will attempt it by persecution from without. The Spirit-filled men of the early Church were stoned, beaten, imprisoned and killed. The form of persecution endured to-day by the Spirit-filled Christian may take a different form but it is none the less real. He who stands four-square for " the whole Gospel in the whole Bible for the whole world " in these days of apostasy is bound to endure persecution. Many a person has given place to the devil in the matter of his faith because he could not endure the taunt of being " unscholarly " or " unintellectual " or because he did not have the courage of his conviction in the atmosphere of opposition and denial. But such persecution is certain to come to every godly believer.

2 Tim. 3: 11–12, " Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; *what persecutions I endured:* but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

In this walk of obedience to God's will we shall be met also by the testings of God. Sometimes it has happened that one who has refused to yield to the temptations of Satan has succumbed to defeat through the testings of God. There is the subtle danger that one who has lived a consistent, yielded, devoted Christian life may think that he has gained thereby a place of special favour in God's family circle and that he merits exoneration from the sufferings of adversity or affliction. A very earnest, active Christian man recently uttered a doubt as to the goodness of God because He had permitted an affliction to come into his home. But let us beware of ever thinking that God's love and goodness mean favouritism, and above all let us not lose the blessing out of even the keenest suffering God permits us to endure by failing to trust Him.

It is well for us to know at the very beginning of our walk in obedience to God that it will mean testing through suffering. We have the pattern for such a walk in the earthly life of our Lord. "Though he were a Son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Think of it—HE *learned obedience!* With a sinless nature that rejoiced above everything else to do His Father's will we would think there would have been no necessity for Him to learn obedience. But the Word tells us that He needed to learn obedience and that this was accomplished through the things that He *suffered.* Is there one of us who does not need to begin in the primary and go clear through the university in the school of obedience? And if our

divine Teacher learned what He would teach us on this great theme through suffering can we expect to learn it in any other way? God does not deceive us in this matter and tells us plainly that we shall be partakers of Christ's sufferings, and this in full accord with His will.

1 Pet. 4: 12–13, "Beloved, *think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you,* as though some strange thing happened unto you. *But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings:* that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

1 Pet. 4: 19, "*Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God* commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

We shall suffer through the misunderstanding, reproach and rejection of those who refuse the Lord Jesus the rule over their lives. It may even be that those of our own household will inflict upon us the keenest suffering we will ever endure. "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Even our well-doing may be evil spoken of and our work and prayer for the salvation of those we love be wholly misinterpreted. But remember Him who "came unto his own and his own received him not;" who was accused of "casting out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils," and who wept over Jerusalem saying, "How often would I . . . and ye would not."

1 Pet. 3: 16–17, R. V., "Having a good conscience; that wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame

who revile your good manner of life in Christ. *For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.*"

1 Pet. 4: 14, "*If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye;* for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

We shall suffer through the chastening which in His infinite love God sees is necessary for our spiritual growth. We need to keep constantly in mind the goal which God has set for us—conformity to the image of His Son. "And this is the will of God even your sanctification." "Be ye holy *even as* I am holy." It is a wondrous thing God wills to work out *in* us and He has His own method of doing it. To polish the vessel into greater perfection God often uses the method of chastening. No words are so clear and comforting on this theme as those of Scripture itself.

Heb. 12: 6–13, "*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,* and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons:* for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? *But if ye be without chastisement,* whereof all are partakers, *then are ye bastards,* and not sons.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; *shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?* For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but *he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; *nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*"

I think of a dear friend whose life is daily being refined as by fire through a terrible affliction which has come upon her only daughter. While talking with her I have seen her face radiant with the light that can come only from a heart at rest in the will of God at the same time her eyes have been blinded with tears. Through her affliction she has become a partaker of the holiness of God.

A Chinese Christian came to talk with me about her old mother for whom she was greatly burdened. She was an ardent idolater and for more than thirty years had been a devoted vegetarian. The daughter had preached the Gospel to her mother, had prayed for her, and had pled with her to become a Christian, but to no avail. The mother's heart hardened rather than softened. "Why does God not hear my prayer for my mother?" she asked almost as though chiding God. I had watched the daughter's face as she talked; there were hard lines in it that were the outward token of inward rebellion. A bit of gentle probing and soon with a flood of tears came the confession of awful rebellion toward God because He had taken her five boys one after another home to Himself—the baby having gone only a month before. "God is unfair and unloving, yea, even cruel!" such was the language of her soul. The will of God was not good and perfect but unjust and unkind. Hardness of heart followed upon rebellion. But God wrought a miracle of grace that day by enabling her joyously to accept and submit to the gracious will of God. Oh! the riches of His grace! The next day in a way wholly inexpli-

cable except by God's supernatural working the old mother came a long distance in from the country to see her daughter. Startled by something in the daughter's face which she had never seen there before she asked what had happened. Then followed the confession of her rebellion toward God because of her affliction and of the hardness of her heart. The old mother's heart was strangely moved and softened and very shortly it opened to admit the Saviour. "No chastening *for the present* seemeth to be joyous—*nevertheless afterward* . . ."

We shall suffer through trials and tribulations permitted to test the sincerity of our surrender and the reality of our faith. Abraham was permitted to build the altar, to lay on the wood, to bind Isaac, to lay him on the altar, to stretch forth his hand, yea, even to take the knife to slay his own son, before the angel of the Lord called unto him from heaven, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, *seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*" Some such test may be used by God to bring into the light the quality of our surrender and faith.

1 Pet. 1: 6–7, R. V., "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, *ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith,* being more precious than gold that perisheth *though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

In conversation with a godly man who verily walked

with his Lord the fact was disclosed that the life of joy and peace in the Lord which he then enjoyed had come only after he had walked through a hailstorm of trial which had stripped him of several hundreds of thousands of dollars. But you could not have bought him back to his former life had you laid that amount in cash upon his table.

In the recent trouble in Nanking, China, many of the Chinese Christians lost all their earthly possessions. But their hearts were filled with praise that God had counted them worthy to suffer thus for Christ.

Some pamphlets and books which have reached a circulation of hundreds of thousands and have brought untold blessing to countless persons were written by a man whose body is so frail that he can write for only a few moments at a time. But everything that comes from his pen breathes forth the joy and peace of a heart sunk deep into submissiveness to the will of God.

Again some have faltered by the way and failed to walk obediently because they have murmured at God's choice of a path. They rejoiced in the thought of being "made perfect in every good work to do his will" but they mistook a *good* work for a *great* work. Instead God asked for a quiet walk with Him in the obscurity of the home perchance ministering to the needs of an aged parent or a sick sister. God's will was to live joyously before Him and patiently before others, following the example of Him who as truly did His Father's will when making tables in the carpenter shop and assisting in the support of a widowed mother as when He fed five thousand people or taught the

multitude. Only a very few of those who were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost were made apostles; most of the one hundred and twenty were sent back into the ordinary life of business and home.

God wishes us at the very beginning of our walk with Him to accept His will as "good and perfect and acceptable" and then to enter into each day sinking our will into His and submitting with joy and gladness to whatever comes during its hours knowing that every testing and trial is being used by Him to mature our growth into the likeness of our Lord.

HEB. 13: 21, "*Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,* working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

JAMES 1: 2–4, R. V., "*Count it all joy,* my brethren, *when ye fall into manifold temptations* (*trials*): Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, *that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.*"

A Walk in Conformity to God's Ways.

God's will is not an intangible, indefinite thing. Indeed so practical is it that it stretches itself over our entire manner of living claiming the authority to fashion our daily walk.

DEUT. 5: 33, "*Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you,* that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess."

1 KINGS 3: 14, "*And if thou wilt walk in my ways,* to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days."

Over the family life of His children the heavenly Father presides and He fully expects to counsel with them regarding the kind of clothes they wear; the books they read; the studies they pursue; the companions they seek; the business they enter; the money they spend; the possessions they have; the life plans they form; their habits of recreation and play as well as of work; and their food and drink. Radiating from the will of God as the center there are ways of thinking, talking, resting, working, playing, eating, dressing, living which are consistent with our home life in the heavenlies and are worthy of the training which we have received of our Father.

PHIL. 1: 27, R. V., "Only let *your manner of life* be worthy of the gospel of Christ."

PHIL. 2: 15, R. V., "That ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, *among whom ye are seen as lights in the world.*"

Yet there are prodigals in the Father's family who despising the restraints in the Father's home go their own way into the far country. There are others who remain at home but reserve the right in certain matters to conform their ways to those of the world. There are Christian men who contend that in business one must use the methods of the world to succeed even if

they are somewhat shady and dishonouring. There are earnest Christian women who in matters of dress follow the extreme fashions of the world. There are both men and women who in most of their ways of life have sought and followed the Lord's guidance, yet in the one supreme choice—that of a partner for life—have disobeyed God's direct command to marry "in the Lord," and a life of suffering and sorrow has often been the result. There are leaders of the Church even who have departed so far from God's ways of financing His work that they have filled the house of prayer with the tables of money changers. Many a Christian has ceased to walk in the will of God because at some definite point he has departed from the ways of God. To be filled again with God's Spirit will mean to return to the place of disobedience in confession of sin and then start aright in God's way.

1 PET. 1: 14, R. V., "*As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts* in the time of your ignorance."

ROM. 12: 2, R. V., "And *be not fashioned according to this world:* but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

But it is not only in what we do but in what we do not do that we fail to follow the ways of the Lord. In so many homes God seems to figure so little in the ordinary life of week days. The family attend church together on Sunday and perhaps the children are sent to Sunday School but there is no family altar, no

blessing at the table, no mention of God in conversation.

A Walk in Obedience to the Word of God.

Some may plead ignorance of the will of God as an excuse for disobedience. But God does not ask us to walk in the dark. God has spoken to us and His will is clearly revealed in His Word. Over and over again in the Old Testament God commanded the children of Israel to hearken unto His voice and then to do what they heard. And He commanded parents to teach their children that the children also might walk in the will and way of God. "The word 'obey' comes from a Latin compound, it means that you *do* in consequence of what you *hear*." In the New Testament God makes the same appeal to His children.

DEUT. 28: 1, "And it shall come to pass, *if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe* and *to do* all his commandments which I command this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth."

JAMES 1: 22–24, "But *be ye doers of the word,* and *not hearers only,* deceiving your own selves. For if any be *a hearer of the word, and not a doer,* he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straitway forgetteth what manner of man he was."

To walk in the whole will of God requires that we walk in the whole truth of God. Some err and depart from walking in God's ways because they reserve to themselves the right to become critics of God's Word

and to accept or reject it according to the dictates of reason. But how can one do the will of God when he has rejected some portion of the Word of God which possibly he most needs? Will one who has rejected the personality of the Holy Spirit pay much attention to the command "Be filled with the Spirit"? Another may have refused to accept the truth of a life of victory over the power of sin even thinking it an unscriptural doctrine. Then he is not likely to obey the command to reckon himself dead to sin and to let it not reign over him. Walking in the will of God demands a walking in the truth of God.

2 JOHN 4, "I rejoice greatly that I found of thy children *walking in truth*, as we have received a commandment from the Father."

3 JOHN 4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children *walk in truth*."

When one has accepted the whole truth of God's inspired Word, he has opened his whole being to the light that streams from the throne of God and he has come into such an adjustment to the Spirit of truth that he can be led into a walk in the pure light of God's Word.

JOHN 16: 13, "Howbeit *when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth;* for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come."

1 JOHN 1: 7, "But *if we walk in the light as he is in the light*, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The one, who submits himself to the teaching of the Holy Spirit and who takes the Word of God to be the standard by which his life is to be fashioned and directed, will be filled with an intense desire to know the will of God. He will make it the most fervent prayer of his life that he may be filled with a knowledge of God's will so that he may walk worthy of his Lord.

COL. 1: 9–10, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that *ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;* That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

To such a man the Word of God becomes a new Book and the discovery of God's will therein will not be a duty to be shunned but a delight to be enjoyed. His spiritual life may be marvellously enriched or even quite revolutionized by the discovery of and obedience to some command. The "Unknown Christian" in *How to Live the Victorious Life* gives this personal testimony, "As the writer looks back on his past life nothing so surprises him as the fact that he failed to see, or grasp, or apprehend this Victorious Life teaching, although it is not new, although it is so plainly taught in Scripture."

Think of the change that would be wrought in some life given up to worry, anxiety and fretfulness if the commands "In nothing be anxious" (Phil. 4: 6) and "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Col. 3: 15) were really obeyed. Witness the sunshine of

joy and praise flood some murmuring, discontented, grumbling heart that begins to live by "Be ye thankful" (Col. 3: 15), "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5: 18), and "Rejoice in the Lord alway" (Phil. 4: 4). What times of defeat and depression we might avoid if we just did as God commanded, "Neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4: 27), "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4: 7). What a preventive to yielding to temptation and what a defense against Satan's attacks is for us in this command, "Put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6: 11). What a wealth of blessing we might carry even in our casual contacts with people if we were zealous to follow His direction regarding our conversation. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4: 29). What division among Christians would be displaced by the unity for which our Lord prayed if we obeyed some of His simple, direct commands. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2: 3–4), "Be subject one to another . . . be clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5: 5). What relief even from physical suffering might result from habitual obedience to His command, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10: 31). What possibilities of testimony to others of

the beauty, glory and attractiveness of the life in Christ by simple obedience to His Word, "And whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3: 17).

But perhaps to some a walk of such complete obedience seems unattractive; while to others it seems impossible. Whether or not it is attractive and desirable to us will depend upon two things, our confidence in the Lord and our love for Him. Do we truly believe that God is love? Then we must believe that His will is "good and perfect" and that every command is given not only for the sake of His glory but for our welfare. God is not a tyrannical despot who rejoices in lording it over His subjects. He does not command simply to show His authority. God is a Father and every command He gives looks toward both the immediate and the ultimate good of His child. Our unshakeable belief in the infinite goodness and kindness of God is essential to the joyous obedience to His commands. But we cannot force ourselves to love His will. Our love for God must dovetail into His love for us before we joyously obey His commands. When once we truly love Him more than we love ourselves, more than we love any other person, or thing, then God's commands are not grievous but gracious to us; they cease to be a duty and become a delight.

JOHN 14: 21, 23, "*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:* and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Jesus answered and said

unto him, *If a man love me, he will keep my words;* and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

But to some it seems an utter impossibility to keep the commandments of God. This leads us to our last thought.

A Walk in the Spirit.

Let us admit without hesitation that a life of obedience to God in our own strength is absolutely impossible. We have not the power in ourselves to obey even one command habitually, to say nothing of the power for a continuous walk in obedience.

But for that reason let us not conclude that God asks something unreasonable or impracticable and therefore impossible and thus excuse ourselves for settling down into habitual disobedience. Frances Ridley Havergal says truly, "We may be quite sure of three things. First, that whatever our Lord commands us, He really means us to do. Secondly, that whatever He commands is 'for our good always.' And thirdly, that whatever He commands He is able and willing to enable us to do, 'for all God's biddings are enablings.'"

If "God's bidding is His enabling," then our part is to discover His provision for a walk in obedience to His will, His ways and His Word.

GAL. 5: 25, "If we live in the Spirit, let *us also walk in the Spirit.*"

GAL. 5: 16, "This I say then, *Walk in the Spirit,* and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

By accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour the believer is translated into the sphere of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, then, stands ready to take all responsibility for a "walk" that is in full accord with such a "life." He comes into the believer to indwell and to infill for that very purpose. He knows the mind and the will of God and He will unfold it to us through the Word of God and give to us the desire and the strength to obey.

1 PET. 1: 22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls *in obeying the truth through the Spirit* unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

The Holy Spirit knows the ways of God and He will reveal them to us through the Word and guide our footsteps into the right paths so that we may walk step by step in obedience to the will of God. He will restrain us from one course and constrain us toward another. He will rebuke and reprove us whenever we step out into any by-path of the flesh. If in some particular issue self is allowed to regain supremacy and some part of our walk is dishonouring to God, the Holy Spirit will work within us to guide us back. He not only guides but He guards. He knows every motion and activity of the flesh, every subtle trick and evil design to trip and ensnare the one who walks with God. And He is able even to keep us from stumbling. If we have yielded to Him the control of our lives and have put all authority into His hands, He accepts the responsibility for our walk before God and men.

ROM. 8: 14, "For as many as are *led by the Spirit of God,* they are the sons of God."

JUDE 24, R. V., "Now *unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling,* and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy."

Chafer in his book *He that is Spiritual* has stated so helpfully the meaning of a walk in the Spirit that I shall quote at length from it. "The passage (referring to Gal. 5: 16) is better rendered 'This I say then, By means of the Spirit be walking, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh!' The child of God has no power within himself whereby he can enter, promote, or maintain a 'walk in the Spirit.' This Scripture when rightly rendered, does not make the impossible demand upon a Christian that he in his own strength is to accomplish a 'walk in the Spirit.' It is rather revealed that the Spirit will do the walking in the Christian. The human responsibility is that of a whole dependence upon the Spirit. Walking by means of the Spirit is simply walking by a definite reliance upon the ability and power of the One who indwells. . . . The third condition of true spirituality is, then, an unbroken reliance upon the Spirit to do what He has come to do and what He alone can do. Such is the Father's provision that sin may be *prevented* in the life of His child. . . . The child of God has an all-engaging responsibility of continuing in an attitude of reliance upon the Spirit. This is his divinely appointed task and place of coöperation in the mighty undertakings of God. The locomotive engineer will

accomplish little when pushing at his ponderous train. He is not appointed to such a service. His real usefulness will begin when he takes his place at the throttle. The important conflict in the believer's life is to *maintain* the unbroken attitude of reliance upon the Spirit. Thus, and only thus, can the Spirit possess and vitalize every human faculty, emotion and choice."

If to some a walk in habitual obedience to the will, the ways and the Word of God even in the power of the indwelling Spirit still seems impossible, let us remember that a walk is taken *step by step*. It is a step at a time. And each step taken in obedience makes the next step easier. As we walk in the Spirit our confidence in His power to guide and to guard us deepens and our reliance upon Him grows.

VI

THE BELIEVER'S PART IN REMAINING SPIRIT-FILLED

Bible Study

THE greatest problem of the spiritual man is how to live *habitually* on the highest plane. The question of continuance is the one that perplexes him most. What the Holy Spirit begins in salvation He continues in sanctification. He works for permanence and progress in the spiritual experience of the Christian.

An Abiding and an Abounding Life.

Salvation which commences in accepting Christ as Saviour continues in abiding in Him as Life. The last word Christ spoke to His disciples was on the kind of life they were to live after He went away from them. It was not to be a variable up-and-down experience but their life was to be characterized by steadiness and sturdiness. Permanence would be one of its outstanding marks. It was to be an *abiding* life. Abiding is a steady continuance in an already established relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was to be a life abounding in the exhaustless resources of the Lord of Heaven and earth. Life on the highest plane demands growth. There is to be nothing static in experience, stagnant in condition or slothful in action in the spiritual man's life. The language of

the spiritual man is always, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; . . . forgetting those things which are behind and *reaching forth unto those things which are before,* I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The passion of the spiritual man is progress in things spiritual. He is not content with bearing "fruit," no not even with bearing "more fruit"; his heart is fixed upon the bearing of the "much fruit" which alone glorifies The Father. Abounding means continually rising to higher ground in the already established relationship in Christ.

Abiding implies reciprocity or mutual giving and taking. It connotes such intimacy of relationship as demands interchange of thought, love, devotion. Abiding means fellowship, the walking and talking together of two who love each other devotedly; the friendship of truly sympathetic persons capable of mutual love and mutual response.

1 JOHN 1: 3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and *truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*"

GEN. 5: 22, "And *Enoch walked with God.*"

REV. 3: 20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, *and will sup with him, and he with me.*"

But how can such fellowship exist between One in Heaven and another on earth? Through what means, by what medium, can such communion be maintained?

The answer to this question is to be found in the life of God's second Man. As the Son of Man He maintained unbroken fellowship with His Father in Heaven, and as the representative Man He did it through the same means and by the same medium as our fellowship with Him is to be maintained. In this as in all other things He is our Example.

The Holy Spirit was the divine means of communion and the Holy Scriptures were the divine medium of communication between the eternal Father and the incarnate Son. In other words, the Spirit used the Word as the link between Heaven and earth.

The incarnate Son lived by the Word of God. He was both obedient to it and dependent upon it. His spiritual growth as a child and His guidance as a Man had their spring in the Word of God.

LUKE 2: 40, "And *the child grew,* and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

Strength and stature were His in ever increasing measure. "He was filled with wisdom" that is from above, the wisdom of God. At twelve He astounded the doctors in the temple by His understanding of the Scriptures.

LUKE 4: 4, "And Jesus answered him, saying, *It is written,* That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

LUKE 24: 44, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, *that*

all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

The "It is written" of the Scriptures moulded His conduct and the "That all things must be fulfilled which were written" marked out His course from the beginning to the end of His ministry. In Scripture He found His Father's plan and path clearly outlined for Him. The loving fellowship which existed between Father and Son was rooted in the Son's habitual obedience to and dependence upon the Word of God.

Is it any wonder, then, that He commended to His disciples a similar life of obedience to and dependence upon the living Word of God if they would abide in Him as He had abided in the Father?

JOHN 15: 10, "*If ye keep my commandments,* ye shall abide in my love; *even as I have kept my Father's commandments,* and abide in his love."

JOHN 8: 31, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, *If ye continue in my word,* then are ye my disciples indeed."

JOHN 15: 7, "If ye abide in me, *and my words abide in you,* ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

We only abide in Him as His Word abides in us and accomplishes its own divinely appointed work. Upon our relationship to the Word of God the permanence and progress of our spiritual life depends. This claim may be easily verified through a study of the Spirit's use of the Word.

The Word of God is the Medium in Regeneration.

The instrument used to implant in the human spirit the divine seed of the uncreated life of God is the Word of God. Through the Word we are brought out of death into life.

1 PET. 1: 23, "*Being born again,* not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God,* which liveth and abideth forever."

The Word of God is the Medium in Revelation.

Life requires light. Regeneration presumes revelation. The new-born soul has been "called out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2: 9) and the light of God cannot be concealed from the one to whom the Life of God has been communicated.

Illumination is absolutely essential to the new life in Christ. To maintain the life, light is imperative.

JOHN 1: 4, "In him was life, and *the life was the light of men.*"

JOHN 8: 12, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, *but shall have the light of life.*"

Illumination is absolutely essential to the new walk in Christ.

EPH. 5: 8, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but *now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.*"

1 JOHN 1: 5–7, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; But *if we*

walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

When the Holy Spirit enters the human spirit He bestows a spiritual nature which has the capacity to perceive and an appetite to know. An insatiable hunger and an unquenchable thirst for the knowledge of God possesses a Spirit-filled Spirit-controlled man. He cries with the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for the living God."

One of the sure marks of a spiritual man is his ever increasing knowledge of God. Spiritual perception and spiritual enlightenment stamp a man as a growing Christian. God puts no premium on ignorance. Paul prayed that his converts might have spiritual understanding, Heaven-born wisdom, divine enlightenment.

EPH. 1: 17–18, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, *may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know* what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

COL. 1: 9, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire *that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*"

God expects every child of His to be growing in the knowledge of Him. Paul did not pray that the

Colossian Christians might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding that they might be equipped to fill a chair in a theological seminary or to go as a missionary to some foreign field, but that wherever they were and whatever their task they might "Walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing," "Be fruitful in every good work," and "Be strengthened with might, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."

The Apostle Paul constantly said "Know ye not?" Again and again in the letters to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians he speaks of the things we should know. The words "We know" are almost the key words of the first Epistle of John. Count for yourself the number of times they are used and write out the things the Christian should "Know." In the realm of the spiritual it is the man who knows who does.

DAN. 11: 32, "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries: *but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.*"

In Romans 6 God's divine order is "Know" (v. 6); "Reckon" (v. 11); "Yield" (v. 13); "Obey" (v. 17). It is the man who really knows God who believingly reckons on the great facts of salvation, who voluntarily yields himself to the Saviour, and who gladly obeys Christ, the Lord. Growth in grace and growth in the knowledge of God are simultaneous.

2 PET. 3: 18, "Grow in grace, and *in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

But spiritual knowledge comes through just one channel. The Word of God is the divinely-appointed medium of revelation. The entrance of God's Word giveth light. Life and light come from the same Source.

Ps. 36: 9, "For with thee is the fountain of life: *in thy light shall we see light.*"

Ps. 119: 130, "*The entrance of thy words giveth light;* it giveth understanding unto the simple."

Rom. 10: 17, "So then faith cometh by hearing and *hearing by the Word of God.*"

In the Word of God the Christian finds the revelation of everything needful for salvation, sanctification and service. All that the Father intends His child to know regarding his spiritual possessions, privileges and responsibilities He has revealed in the Bible. The clear revelation of Himself, His will, His way and His purpose is all in the Word.

John 15: 15, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; *for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*"

Eph. 1: 9, "*Having made known unto us the mystery of his will,* according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."

The man who gives himself to daily thought and prayerful meditation on God's Word possesses a degree of spiritual perception out of all proportion to his intellectual capacity or attainment, judged from the standpoint of things natural.

The Word of God is the Medium of Renewal.

Even the spiritual man has no resources in himself. He is in daily need of replenishing. "The spiritual blessings, which are given to him according to the everlasting covenant, are all treasured up in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Once we have begun to draw nigh to God, we must continue to draw nigh. It is both a necessity and a delight. A necessity because we are still as dependent on the creative, supernatural influence of grace. . . . Such pensioners are we of the divine bounty, daily and hourly we must be recipients of His gifts and of His power. Peter imagines he has a stock of courage and loving loyalty in himself; but sad experience teaches him that his nature is feeble and selfish; that not he, but Christ in him, is rock. . . . We have nothing in ourselves; our sufficiency is of God." * The spiritual man never ceases to feel his utter dependence upon God.

God provides for his renewal. The man who is saved by the truth of God's Word is also sanctified by it. The stature and strength of the spiritual man will be in exact proportion to his faithful continuance in the Word of the Lord. The study of God's Word is the divinely-appointed means of spiritual culture; the divinely-ordained method of spiritual growth.

JOHN 17: 17, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*"

JOHN 8: 31, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, *If ye continue in my word,* then are ye my disciples indeed."

* *The Hidden Life,* by Adolph Saphir, pages 19-20.

A careful study of the Scriptural names of the Word of God will reveal God's intended use of it in the renewal of the Christian's life.

The Word is a Mirror to reveal.

JAMES 1: 23–25, "For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, *he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself,* and goeth his way, and straitway forgetteth what manner of man he was. *But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty,* and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

A mirror reveals the personal appearance of the one who looks into it. The Bible is just such a revelation of man. In it we see the human heart mirrored exactly as it is in the sight of God. We have in the Word full-length portraits of the natural, the carnal and the spiritual man. As one studies the Bible he finds himself; mirrored in the lives of men and women who lived centuries ago he sees himself. In the covetousness of Achan, the backsliding of David, the despondency of Elijah, the avarice of Jacob, the falsehood of Ananias and Sapphira, the denial of Peter, the self-righteousness of Saul of Tarsus and the jealousy, unbelief and self-seeking of the disciples, he looks into his own sinful heart and his own wayward life. The Bible takes the covering off the inmost spirit and unveils its secret thoughts and motives. It shows us to ourselves as we are. But it does not stop there. It unfolds to man's vision the Perfect Man. He "Beholds as in a

glass the glory of the Lord" for in the Word God gives "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Then the Bible challenges him, who has seen himself as he is and as he may become, to act upon the vision, to become a doer of the Word in order that he may be conformed to the image of Christ.

The Word is Water to Cleanse and Refresh.

EPH. 5: 25–26, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.*"

JOHN 15: 3, "Now *ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*"

PS. 119: 9, "Wherewithal shall a young man *cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to the Word.*"

Walking as pilgrims through a world reeking in sin we are in constant contact with its defilement and in constant need of cleansing. In olden times the priests, who were cleansed by the blood at the brazen altar, still needed the washing of water at the laver to make them fit for the worship and the work of the tabernacle. So we, though cleansed from the guilt of sin through the blood of the Living Word, yet need daily the washing by the water of the written Word. The Christian's life is kept pure and clean only in the proportion to which the Word of God is hid in the heart and applied to the life.

Water also refreshes. Countless Christians could testify to the removal of weariness of spirit, discourage-

ment of soul and even exhaustion of body through a quiet hour of meditation upon the Word.

The Word of God is Food to Nourish and Delight.

The Word is milk for the newborn babe; it is strong meat for the spiritual adult; and it is honey for the spiritually-minded.

1 PET. 2: 2, "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word,* that ye may grow thereby."

HEB. 5: 14, "*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age,* even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

PS. 9: 10, "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: *sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*"

The man who feeds upon God's Word will become strong; the one who neglects it will be dwarfed. Both stature and strength are gauged by the quality of spiritual food eaten and assimilated. Wherever you find a spiritual anæmic the reason is improper food.

The Christian who is improperly or insufficiently fed is the prey to all kinds of spiritual disease. He is powerless to resist temptation, blind to discern error, helpless to overcome sin. He is open to all the deceiving devices and subtle strategies of the evil one. He not only makes no progress but he cannot even hold his own and lives a flabby, inconsistent, dishonouring life before the world.

The Christian who is not entering into new possessions of God's grace, love and power through new

conquests of the Word is living on the stale manna of some mouldy experience or musty testimony. The new nature is starved because forced to exist on denatured emotions and devitalized vocabulary, "He feedeth on ashes" instead of "the Bread of life." Christ knew that the only food upon which the new nature could thrive was the Word of God. In His High Priestly prayer He said to His Father, "I have given them thy Word" (John 17:14).

Sometimes a Christian worker has lost his power for no other reason than neglect of the Bible. Because of this his message is devoid of freshness and fruitfulness. The inevitable result is the giving of his own word in the wisdom, eloquence and energy of the flesh. This God never promises to bless.

1 Cor. 2: 4, "And *my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom,* but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

1 Thess. 2: 13, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, *when ye received the Word of God* which ye heard of us, *ye received it not as the word of men,* but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4: 14). "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6: 63). Can we think it possible that the food on our tables should be so transmuted in nature's laboratory that it should reappear, now in stalwart muscle of the blacksmith's arm, and now in the fine

texture of the poet's brain, and let it not seem incredible that the Word of God can reappear in every kind of spiritual power and holy efficiency?

The Word of God is a Lamp to Guide.

Ps. 119: 105, "Thy Word is *a lamp unto my feet,* and *a light unto my path.*"

Pitfalls are all around the Christian; the devil has well-laid snares to entrap.

2 Tim. 2: 26, "And *that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil,* who are taken captive by him at his will."

Ps. 119: 110, "*The wicked have laid a snare for me:* yet I erred not from thy precepts."

The straight and narrow way is not always easily discerned and still less easily followed. In these perilous times when there is so much of the world in the Church and when even the shepherd of the flock may walk in ways quite contrary to the Word of God, many an earnest Christian is perplexed and at a loss to know what is a consistent walk. He surely needs a light upon his path.

But he needs even more than that; he needs to be shown each step of the way. The Word of God is just such a guide and, when it is hid in the heart and heeded in the life, the Christian need not wander nor stumble. His every step may be ordered in full conformity to God's will and ways because in full obedience to God's Word.

Ps. 119: 133, "*Order my steps in thy word:* and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

Ps. 37: 31, "The law of his God is in his heart; *none of his steps shall slide.*"

Many mistakes are made by Christians through seeking and following the counsel of men rather than that of God. Some have lost the way altogether and are living outside the will of God because they have listened to man's voice. I know a life that is shipwrecked upon the rock of human counsel, devoid of both peace and power. We cannot be reminded too often of the solemn fact that Adam's sin came through heeding Eve's voice, and Eve sinned by believing and obeying the devil's word instead of God's. There is but one absolutely safe counsellor for the Christian, the Word of God.

Ps. 119: 24, "*Thy testimonies also are* my delight and *my counsellors.*"

2 Tim. 3: 15, "And that from a child thou hast known *the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation* through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The teaching, instruction, warning, correction and guidance which every Christian needs to make him complete and to equip him for service are all to be found in the Bible.

2 Tim. 3: 16, 17, R. V., "Every scripture inspired of God is also *profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction* which is in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

The Word of God is Wealth to Enrich.

Ps. 119: 14, "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, *as much as in all riches.*"

Ps. 119: 72, "The law of thy mouth is better unto me *than thousands of gold and silver.*"

Ps. 119: 127, "Therefore I love thy commandments *above gold; yea above fine gold.*"

Ps. 119: 162, "I rejoice at thy word, *as one that findeth great spoil.*"

There is constant drain upon the Christian. Everything in his environment tends to impoverishment of spirit. There is unceasing need of renewal through enrichment. But in the Lord Jesus are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2: 3); in Him are embodied all the unsearchable riches of grace and glory (Phil. 4: 19; Eph. 1: 7). The Spirit opens these to us by opening the Scriptures and enabling us through the Word to know and to claim all the things which He hath given us richly to enjoy.

The Word of God is a Critic to Judge.

Heb. 4: 12, "*For the Word of God* is quick and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"

The Greek word "Krítikos" means able to judge. The tendency to-day is that men choose to be critics of the Word rather than to accept the Word as their

critic. But one very salutary function of the Bible is its judgment upon the Christian's thoughts and actions. The Psalmist who offered that sincere prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," knew the helpfulness of God's righteous judgments.

Ps. 119: 164, "Seven times a day do I praise thee *because of thy righteous judgments.*"

Ps. 119: 175, "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and *let thy judgments help me.*"

What a quickening of spiritual life would take place to-day if every child of God would put his life under the righteous judgment of the Word of God. The long-prayed for revival undoubtedly would burst forth like fire if the Bible were permitted to become the Critic of men's thoughts, feelings and actions, and if they were willing to act upon its kindly, beneficent criticism.

The Word of God is a Manual of Holy Living.

Ps. 119: 1–3, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, *who walk in the law of the Lord.* Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: *they walk in his ways.*"

God has provision for every step of the way in the life of godliness, which He expects His child to live. In His Word He has given the principles that govern such a life, and the precepts which teach us how to

practice them. The Christian who practices the presence of God and who lives the Christ-life most transparently is the one who is most thoroughly saturated with God's Word and who deliberately has given himself to live out that Word in deed.

The Word of God is a Weapon.

EPH. 6: 17, "And take the helmet of salvation, and *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*"

The Spirit-filled man has enemies; he is engaged in a warfare. The powers of hell are all against him. He is always open to attack and momentarily liable to defeat. He needs both defensive and offensive weapons. He must be able both to stand and to withstand in every assault of Satan.

There is but one way this can be done and it is the way the God-man used. His only weapon in the wilderness was the Sword of the Spirit. "It is written," repeated three times in the threefold attack, repulsed the enemy.

Let us note that the God-man had His sword burnished and ready. He did not wait to draw out the scroll of Scripture and read from it to get an answer for the devil. In the years of seclusion in the Nazareth home He had stored away the Words of God in His heart, and in the hours of quiet work in the carpenter's shop He had meditated upon them. It may be that the Son of Man had gone into the wilderness fresh from the study of Deuteronomy. His mind was so saturated with its truth that when Satan attacked Him, the Spirit instantly brought to His re-

membrance the very words that utterly routed him. He was kept in the moment of temptation by the Word hid in His heart.

DEUT. 11: 18, "*Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul,* and bind them for a sign upon your hand that they may be as frontlets between your eyes."

PS. 119: 11, "*Thy Word have I hid in my heart,* that I might not sin against thee."

COL. 3: 16, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;* teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Often the reason we yield so quickly to temptation is because our sword is rusty. This gives Satan the advantage over us. Temptation comes to us on the street, in the office, when we may not have a Bible with us. It comes unexpectedly. There is no time to stop and search for an effectual portion of Scripture. It is only that part of the Word that is hid in the heart that will become a Sword in action at the moment most needed. It is the portion of the Word of God which we have learned and lived that will be effectual in the fight with Satan.

Another essential to success is confidence in the weapon we use. I feel sure there was the certitude of victory in the very tone of the voice when the Lord Jesus said, "It is written!" To Him the Word was authoritative and final. His confidence in the absolute authority of Deuteronomy had not been weakened by

a doubtful attitude toward its authorship. To Him it was the Word of God forever settled in Heaven. He had no question concerning its potency because He had no doubt concerning its purity or its permanence.

PS. 12: 6, "*The words of the Lord are pure words:* as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."

PROV. 30: 5, "*Every word of God is pure;* he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."

LUKE 21: 33, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: *but my words shall not pass away.*"

Many Christians are defeated to-day in the warfare against sin and Satan because of doubt regarding their weapon, the Word of God. To them the Word is not the Sword of the Spirit but it is merely a staff of man's making to assist him on the pathway of life which he feels at liberty to whittle down to the measure of his own intellect and experience. Belief in the absolute trustworthiness and final authority of the Word is an essential to the potent use of it as the Sword.

The Word of God is a Fire that both Burns and Warms.

JER. 20: 9, "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. *But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire* shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

The Bible is like a fire that burns out the dross, purifying and purging. It is a devouring flame before

which nothing that is contrary to God's will and ways can stand.

JER. 5: 14, "Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, *I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.*"

1 PET. 1: 22, "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth* through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

It is at the same time a fire that warms with comfort and cheer the heart desolated by sorrow and distressed through suffering.

1 THESS. 4: 18, "Wherefore *comfort* one another *with these words.*"

PS. 119: 50, "This is my comfort in my affliction: *for thy word hath quickened me.*"

PS. 119: 165, "*Great peace have they which love thy law:* and nothing shall offend them."

The Word of God is a Hammer to Break.

JER. 23: 29, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; *and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.*"

There is such a residue of stubbornness, resistance and rebellion in every life! The man who has been accustomed to go his own way, seek his own pleasure and do his own will is not easily made submissive and humble. There is much in every one of us that is

hard which needs to be broken; much that is resisting which needs to be melted.

As the Christian studies the Word and comes under the softening rays of God's loving-kindness, tender mercy, unfailing faithfulness, unquenchable love and exhaustless grace, his heart is melted, his will is broken and his life is turned into joyous, humble submission to the loving will of God.

The Word of God is a Seed that Matures and Multiplies.

LUKE 8: 11, "Now the parable is this: *The seed is the word of God.*"

JAMES 1: 18, "Of his own will *begat he us with the word of truth,* that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

PS. 126: 6, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, *bearing precious seed,* shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, *bringing his sheaves with him.*"

A seed in itself is but a small hard substance which, if laid away in a drawer will remain only a seed. But put into suitable soil, given needed nurture, it will become a plant or a tree. The Word of God is seed. Left on the drawing-room table to give semblance of religion to the home or carried when travelling to fulfil a promise to a praying mother at home, or as a sacred charm to ward off disaster, it will never influence or change the life in any way whatsoever. But let that incorruptible seed which has the very germ of life in it—"My words are life"—be sown in the soil of

the human heart by the Holy Ghost and it fructifies in a new creation.

Nor is it enough to accept the Bible as historically true. Before it can manifest its power to save and to sanctify it must be engrafted upon the inner life.

James 1: 21, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and *receive with meekness the engrafted word,* which is able to save your souls."

The seed needs to be fostered and nurtured by earnest study and eager searching. Seed needs time to grow. The Word must be pondered and meditated upon. It must lie fallow in the mind, heart, conscience and will to bring forth its full fruitage. The seed must be kept abiding in the soil of faith. The Christian must continue in the Word. The Word must abide in him by day and by night.

Ps. 119: 97, "O how love I thy law! *it is my meditation all the day.*"

Ps. 119: 148, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, *that I might meditate in thy word.*"

John 15: 7, "If ye abide in me, *and my words abide in you,* ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Countless times have I seen the maturing, multiplying power of the Word of God when engrafted upon a human life but in none more beautifully illustrated than in the life of a Chinese teacher who came to a summer Conference as an interpreter. Although he

had been a Christian for many years and was active in Christian work yet he was lamentably ignorant of the Word of God. This fact was so borne in upon him as he interpreted the missionary's message that he determined to leave his position as teacher immediately and devote himself to the study of the Bible. He went to a seminary for a short time, then spent several months alone with only the Holy Spirit as Teacher and Revealer of the deep things of the Book. At the end of a year of such intensive Bible study he returned to the community where he had lived formerly.

Shortly afterward I received a letter from a missionary in that city, in which she said:

"It would delight your very soul could you see and know all the wonderful way in which the Lord has led and used W—— in the last six or eight months. His Bible classes last fall and winter numbering about two hundred, were very fine indeed. He had them for all classes, from college boys down to the cooks and other servants on our compounds. *His year away made a new man of him.* That year's study did worlds for him in the Scriptures. *His familiarity with the Bible now is as marked as his lack of it was before this year of close application, and of course he is going on too, gaining ground all the time.* He is probably going to be ordained in a few weeks now and become assistant pastor of the ——— church. The strongest thing about W—— is his life of prayer. Partly through the instrumentality of him and his sister, if not *mostly,* there are now being held three meetings a day just for prayer. And praise His Name, there have been some extraordinary answers to the prayers of this little circle which has for many months met every Sunday morning very early, really before the dawn. Now they have it every day."

Coldness of heart, callousness of conscience, weakness of will, feebleness of testimony, joylessness in worship, fruitlessness in service, powerlessness in prayer all are traceable to just one thing—ignorance of and indifference to God's Word. "Ye seek to kill me, *because my word hath no place in you*" (John 8: 37). But, when the Word is given its rightful place in any life, it has power to convict, to convert, to cleanse, to control, to criticize, to correct and to consecrate. It becomes a mould that fashions the life into ever growing likeness to the image of Christ Jesus. "The Word is an expulsive power to turn out the tyranny of sin; an enlightening power to dispel the darkness of ignorance; an ennobling power to elevate the mind; an eradicating power to cleanse the heart; an endowing power to enrich the being, and an effectual power to bless in every way to the glory of God." *

Bible Study for Personal Spiritual Growth.

I was once asked by a group of high school pupils to lead their Christian Endeavour meeting. The invitation read as follows, "We would like for you to tell us how *to read it so as to get the most out of it*. Most of us read a chapter a day but then I am afraid that we do not do very much else." Doubtless this is the experience of many Christians.

To know how to study the Bible for personal spiritual growth is the need of every Christian, old and young. It is not possible in the confines of this chapter to make suggestions regarding methods of Bible study. Nor is it necessary to do so for the person who

* *The Spiritual Life*, F. E. Marsh, page 49.

truly desires to know the Word will discover for himself the best method.

But I would mention three things which to me seem essential for the kind of Bible study which will lift a Christian to life on the highest plane. They are *an adequate objective, a right attitude,* and *an obedient response.*

The reason why the Bible "has no taste" and why it is so unproductive of spiritual harvest in our lives is partly due to the lack of an adequate objective. To read the Bible aimlessly, to read it because one has signed a pledge promising to read a chapter a day or because of the desire to please a parent, teacher or friend, but without the purpose to remember what is read and to reproduce it in character and conduct, while it may bring blessing, will not lift one to life on the highest plane. To read it spasmodically, to desire comfort in sorrow, to obtain strength in trial, to find wisdom in perplexity and to receive guidance in uncertainty, while all are legitimate motives, yet they are not the highest nor those most productive of spiritual gain.

There is, in fact, but one objective that is altogether adequate and it is that through the Word of God, we may know the Son of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is the central fact, and the commanding figure of the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation He is to be found. No book of the Bible will be fully understood until Christ be seen in it. He is the pivot upon which everything in the divine revelation turns and He is the fountain from which everything in spiritual experience

springs. *To know Him* is eternal life, to know Him better and better is life abiding and abounding.

PHIL. 3: 8, 10, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss *for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus* my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, *that I may win Christ. That I may know Him,* and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

"That I may know Him"—that I may win Christ—this is the objective that will challenge one to earnestly, eagerly search the Scriptures.

The papers of a continent recorded the story of the non-stop flight of Col. Lindbergh from Washington, D. C. to Mexico City. Alone he flew for twenty-seven hours through an untraversed track of air, enduring loss of sleep and lack of food, surmounting great difficulties and encountering great dangers from the beginning to the end of the trip. He faced all these conditions before he started but he had an objective that was big enough and worthy enough and challenging enough—to win Mexico City in a non-stop flight. And he reached his goal while the people of a whole continent looked on his achievement with admiration and praise.

Col. Lindbergh had an adequate objective but how was it attained? Through skill you say. But was there any other contributing cause to the success of his flight? Judging by an article written by the commandant of Bolling Field from which he took off on his

flight half of the success of the trip was won before he ever stepped into his plane at Washington. He says, "The flier *studied everything*. He pored over weather maps; figured time and fuel needed; and examined the field minutely. On three different occasions he walked over the entire airdrome carefully, noting the soft or boggy places, the rough spots, the sound, high, firm or grassy places, the ditches, depressions and obstacles bordering the airdrome, the height of trees, buildings, smoke-stacks, radio towers, etc., within a mile from the field; also the fact that the river level was ten to fifteen feet below the airdrome level at one particular end of the field where no hurdle presented itself." Col. Lindbergh had an adequate objective which constrained him to make this minute and masterful study of everything pertaining to that flight.

One day on the road to Damascus the young Hebrew, Saul of Tarsus, saw the Lord Jesus Christ. Then and there he was not only converted but captivated. "One figure enraptured him, captivated his being, bound him as with chains, and that figure is Christ Jesus, the Lord. One passion reigns, one motive dominates, that the Lord, in love, devotion and service should be his all-in-all. Everything else is subservient, everything else is counted as refuse that this one object may be altogether his. Nothing of earth is comparable to Him, nothing of earth is desired beside Him. All that once was counted gain is discarded as loss for the priceless possession of the eternal treasure—Jesus Christ the Lord."

Paul, having caught a vision of his risen, exalted

Lord, having been captivated by His grace and glory, was consumed with the passion to make "a non-stop flight" to the perfect possession of all his glorious inheritance in Christ Jesus. His objective—"that I may win Christ"—so big, so worthy, so challenging that it made the things of time, sense and earth sink into utter insignificance. His objective—"that I may know him"—so constraining that it carried him away into Arabia for three years where he received the God-inspired revelation which has come down to you and me through his Epistles.

What is your objective in Bible Study? Is it merely to satisfy intellectual curiosity? Is it only to know the contents of the Bible and to appreciate its literary value as one of the great books in the world's library? Is it even for a purely selfish enrichment of your own life? Or do you come every day to the written Word of God that you may better know the eternal, incarnate, risen, living Word of God as He is revealed in its pages? Your goal will very largely determine your gain. Will you to-day enter the company of those who, emulating the Apostle Paul's example, approach God's Word daily saying "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may win Christ and be found in him." There will surely be a divine response to such seeking and God will give "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

2 Cor. 4: 6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine

out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*"

The second essential in Bible Study for personal spiritual growth is a right attitude. What we get from the Bible is determined very largely by what we bring to it. If we approach the Bible in an attitude of doubt we shall probably leave it in doubt.

A Christian worker whose faith in the Word of God had been so undermined and poisoned that she said she disbelieved and doubted everything in the Book before she even opened it, came one day to me in great distress. She had been asked to give an Easter message and she had none to give. She came to ask that we might read together the accounts of the resurrection in the four Gospels. As we read Matt. 28: 17, "And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted," she just dropped her Bible and said, "Oh! it is no wonder they doubted!" I said, "Oh! is *that* the way you read it? As I read it it is no wonder that they *worshipped!*" "I see," she replied, "it all depends on the attitude you bring to the Bible; if you bring doubt, you will doubt: if you bring worship, you will worship."

The first secret of Bible Study is faith born of humility. He that comes to God must believe that He *is* and that He *does*. He must come believing that through the Word God speaks and therefore he must come humbly and reverently.

Heb. 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please

him; for he that cometh to God must believe *that he is,* and *that he is a rewarder of them* that diligently seek him."

Ps. 119: 161, "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: *but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.*"

But we must not only approach the study of God's Word in faith but in love. It will not yield a very abundant harvest to the one who comes to it merely from a sense of duty. To enrich the life Bible study must be regarded as a delight. How well the Psalmist knew his Lord. The secret is not hard to discover.

Ps. 1: 2, "*But his delight is in the law of the Lord;* and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Ps. 119: 47, "*And I will delight myself in thy commandments,* which I have loved."

But how contrary is such an attitude to that of most Christians. In what a purely perfunctory, desultory manner many Christians study or read the Bible. It is like a bit of distasteful medicine that is needed for the sake of health but the quicker taken the better. The Bible is opened in a haphazard fashion to any place; the reading is done with no relish; the Book is gladly closed and what was read makes little impression.

The Word of God is a living thing and accordingly responds to the treatment given to it. What a difference it makes when one truly hungers for the Bread of life; when one thirsts for the living Water; when one comes to the Word of God with a keen appetite for

a full meal. The Word of God becomes food to such an one and honey to his taste.

Jer. 15: 16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; *and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart:* for I am called by thy name, O Lord of hosts."

Job 23: 12, R. V., "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips: *I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.*"

Ps. 119: 103, "*How sweet are thy words unto my taste!* yea, *sweeter than honey to my mouth!*"

What a difference it makes when one approaches the Bible as on a quest, when one is really hunting for something as the gold digger hunts for the gold. Then he is content with no superficial reading but he systematically searches; he seeks for great spoil; he diligently digs for the deepest truths. Such an one is saved from intellectual laziness and stands ready for the concentration and meditation required of one who deeply knows God. The Bible becomes a gold mine to such a searcher after truth.

Ps. 119: 127, "Therefore *I love thy commandments above gold;* yea above fine gold."

Ps. 119: 162, "*I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*"

What a difference it makes when one truly loves the Book and longs to know Christ! Then he does not study with an eye on the clock but rather rejoices to find an extra hour or two that he may spend upon

the Word. Such a man knows the thrill of "a non-stop flight" even through Genesis, Isaiah or Revelation. He loves the Book of God because he loves the God of the Book.

Ps. 119: 140, "Thy word is very pure; therefore *thy servant loveth it.*"

John 14: 21, "*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is* that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

We must approach the Word of God not only in faith and in love but in a willingness to obey. To learn and then not to live is deadly and disastrous. Disobedience to what God said through doubt kept the children of Israel out of Canaan and later took their posterity into captivity and exile. One must become a doer of the Word.

Deut. 6: 1, "Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, *that ye might do them,* in the land whither ye go to possess it."

John 14: 23, "Jesus answered and said unto him, *If a man love me, he will keep my words:* and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

The Bible will never really become ours until we have the consistent and persistent purpose to live what we learn. We might make a very careful study of the constituent elements of foods and know just how much

of each we need in our system to ensure health but that knowledge will not give strength of body. Only as we eat, digest and assimilate the food itself does it minister to our bodily needs. So we need to beware of mere head knowledge of the Bible. Apart from the Holy Spirit's inworking of the Word of life into the very fabric of our being it has no saving nor sanctifying power. This He cannot do unless there is an obedient response on our part. The Word is not given to us to make our intellects treasure-houses of heavenly wisdom but to make our hearts the sanctuaries of the heavenly One. God's warnings have no value for one unless they are heeded: His precepts profit nothing unless they are followed and His commandments can only bless as they are obeyed. "*If* ye keep my commandments." The whole force of what follows draws its meaning from that little word "if." If we take food into the body, it becomes blood and muscle, so if we incorporate the Word of God into our life, it becomes character and conduct. When studying God's Word we should say to ourselves constantly, "How can this be worked into the very woof and warp of my life?" The Bible to yield its full fruitage demands not only consideration and meditation but application.

Some one has told of a Korean Christian who was examined on the Sermon on the Mount and was able to repeat it without mistake. When the missionary asked, "How did you manage to learn it so perfectly?" the reply came, "I learned it a verse or a few verses at a time. I would learn a verse and then go out and find some one to *practice it on*."

A native of India read the Gospels for the first time and while filled with admiration for the God-man, yet such a life in such a world seemed wholly incredible to him. Then he read on into the Epistles and learned that the Christian was one who was like his Lord and whose life was lived in obedience to the Word. So he started out on a quest—*to find a man whose life matched* the Book—determining that if his quest were successful, he would believe. If he had seen you or me would he have found one whose life matched the Book?

Dr. Alex. Smellie wrote of Evan H. Hopkins, "He was a *sermon incarnate*. The sunshine of the Better Country where his days and nights were spent, played on his soul and articulated itself in his speech; it was sunshine not merely visible but audible."

It is the man who obeys the truth as he knows it whose capacity is enlarged to receive larger and fuller revelations of truth. The man who steadfastly lives out what he learns is ever learning more.

GEN. 13: 14, "And the Lord said unto Abram, *after that Lot was separated from him*, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward."

"The Lord said—after that." Here is a most significant sequence. Obedience to God's command brought the fuller revelation of God's purpose to Abram. So will it be with you and me. Disobedience to the known will of God as revealed in His Word is

the cause of much of the stagnancy and slothfulness in the churches of to-day. What a revival would take place in the corporate body of Christ, the Church, and what a revolution there would be in the individual members if every Christian began to live what he has learned of the Word of God.

Sir Arthur Blackwell has summed up the Christian's relationship to the Bible in four great words.

"ADMIT"—Open your whole being to let it be flooded with light. Let the truth in. Study the Bible sympathetically and lovingly. Let it be God's voice to you direct.

"SUBMIT"—Let the truth grip you that it may govern you. "Let the plain declarations of God's Word be the end of all controversy. Whenever we raise an issue with God all growth and all blessing must stop until that issue is settled."

"COMMIT"—Grip the truth by hiding it in your heart. Let to-day's message be articulated to yesterday's so that a chain is forged that is a veritable anchor to your soul in times of temptation, trouble and trial.

"TRANSMIT"—"Don't be a pool; be a stream." Don't hoard your riches; share the bounties of the Lord's table with another. Make every truth tenfold your own by passing it on.

Missionary A—— possessed some strawberry plants which he shared with Missionary B—— who came to live beside him. That year Missionary A's plants were all destroyed by insects and Missionary B—— gave back to Missionary A—— half his plants. So all the plants which Missionary A—— possessed were what he gave away.

The Holy Spirit—The Divine Teacher, Guide and Revealer.

There is no reason for ignorance of divine things on the part of any Christian who can read, for God has not only furnished us with a Text-book but with a Teacher: He has given us not only a Guide-book but a Guide: He has unfolded to us not only a Revelation but has bestowed upon us the Revealer.

JOHN 14: 26, "But the Comforter, which is *the Holy Ghost*, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things*, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

JOHN 16: 13, "Howbeit when he, *the Spirit of truth*, is come, *he will guide you into all truth:* for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

1 COR. 2: 9–10, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit:* for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Millions of Christians never have the opportunity to study the Bible in a theological seminary, Bible School or College. Comparatively few even have the privilege of being in a Bible class. But that does not exclude them from knowing all things which God has given in Christ to them that love Him. God not only desires but expects His children to know the way of life, how to enter upon it and how to walk in it. There

are some things which God has not revealed unto us but all that He has revealed belongs unto us and a full knowledge of this revelation is our birthright as His children.

DEUT. 29: 29, " The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: *but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever,* that we may do all the words of this law."

God has taken our ignorance and inability into account and has made provision for our supernatural illumination and enlightenment. Read 1 Cor. 1: 18–3: 4, with this in mind.

The spiritual man then has One who will teach him " all things that pertain to life and godliness " and who will apply them to his life so that the knowledge will not be only intellectual or academic but spiritual and experimental. The Holy Spirit will not only teach us the truth but will guide us *into it,* enabling us to incorporate it into our lives that we may become holy and righteous even as He.

One reason why the Bible has no meaning to us but rather seems incredible and unintelligible is because we try to understand it with our unaided and unanointed intellect. God only promises spiritual apprehension to the one who has received the Holy Spirit's anointing. Only a spiritual mind can receive spiritual truth.[1]

1 JOHN 2: 20, R. V., " And *ye have an anointing* from the Holy One, *and ye know* all things."

1 JOHN 2: 27, R. V., "And as for you, *the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you,* and ye need not that any one teach you; but as *his anointing teacheth you concerning all things,* and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him."

"Ye have an anointing—ye know," "His anointing —teacheth you." God has a divine order which is irreversible.

I know a Chinese man who has a spiritual apprehension and appreciation of Scripture beyond that of the majority of Christian workers, yet he never attended a Bible school a day in his life or studied in a mission school. But his eyes have been anointed to see, his heart to receive and his mind to understand the deep, eternal verities of the Word of God.

Fellow-Christian, have you had that anointing? Have your eyes been anointed to see the beauties and excellencies of the adorable Lord of glory as revealed in the Word? Or are you groping your way through the Bible depending upon your unaided human intellect to fathom the unsearchable riches of God's grace? Have you come from your study of the Bible disappointed and discouraged?

I once visited a wonderful cave in Colorado. Impatient of the delay caused by the slowness of the party gathering together I rushed alone into the cave. All was dark, I couldn't even see which way to go. Seeing a lantern near the entrance I took that and tried to lift it high enough to see some of the loudly proclaimed beauties of that cave. But I saw nothing and turned back in disappointment. After a while the party came

with a guide. He commanded us to follow him very closely. In a few minutes he lifted a big torch, which he carried in his hand, high up to the ceiling of the cave and oh! what exclamations of surprise and delight came from every member of the party as the beauty and wonder of the stalagmites and stalactites burst upon our vision. Every step we took our guide unfolded to us some fresh glory of God's handiwork in the heart of that cave.

And we have such a Guide whose mission is to unveil before us the beauty and glory of our risen, exalted Lord and Saviour. If you would live your life habitually on the highest plane, you must seek His anointing; you must wait upon Him to reveal to you in the Word "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"; you must through your obedient response allow Him to apply the Word wherever and however He sees it is needed for your conformity to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

VII

THE BELIEVER'S PART IN REMAINING SPIRIT-FILLED

Prayer

THE Christian life centers in a relationship. It is a divine-human fellowship which has its inward spring in the oneness of life between Christ and the Christian. There are two essential expressions to this Heaven-born, earth-bent relationship, communion and coöperation.

An Inner Room—Reciprocal Communion.

Matt. 6: 6, "But thou, *when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,* and *when thou hast shut thy door,* pray to thy Father which is *in secret;* and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Matt. 14: 23, R. V., "He went up into the mountain *apart to pray,* and when even was come he was there *alone.*"

Mark 6: 46–47, R. V., "And after he had taken leave of them *he departed into the mountain to pray,* and when even was come the boat was in the midst of the sea, and *he was alone* on the land."

The man who lives habitually on the highest plane will have an inner room and he who remains Spirit-filled will spend some time each day behind a shut door. He who truly follows the example of the God-man will often be alone with his heavenly Father. The

spiritual man will be a man of prayer. Communion with the Lord Jesus will be the atmosphere in which he lives, the very air he breathes.

" He went up into the mountain apart to pray." His inner room was a mountainside. There He sought His Father's presence away from every person, out of sight and sound of the things of this world. What took the incarnate Son apart to pray? Two things constrained Him to the solitary place of communion, His love and His need of the Father.

Can we begin to comprehend the longing of the Son on earth for the Father in Heaven? He and the Father were one and it was a unity, first of all, in love. Throughout all eternity He had been in the bosom of the Father. He had lived in His intimate, immediate presence. Oh! it was the hunger and thirst of love that drew the God-man apart even from the friends whose companionship He so prized, apart from the work that He so loved, apart to that inner room in God's out of doors.

Alone with His Father on the mountain slope He could pour out His soul, He could lay bare His heart, He could unburden His spirit. There His desires, His longings, His heartaches, His disappointments, could be expressed! And in that inner room on the mountainside the Father always met Him. He was sure of a listening ear and a sympathetic heart. He always left the place of prayer refreshed. The inner room is the place of reciprocal communion.

Do you have an inner room? A shut door? A place to be alone with your Lord? It may be a real " closet "

in your own home or it may be only a place in a tramcar or at a desk or on a mountainside or in a sickroom but it will be a place where the world is shut out and in spirit you are shut in alone with your Lord. It will be a place where Heaven and earth meet and the intimate, immediate presence of the Lord of glory will be realized.

Our desire to be alone with the Lover-Christ and our delight in the companionship of our Beloved will reveal the place He really holds in our affections. To have chosen Him as the Lover of one's soul; to have been joined to Him as one spirit; to share His life in its fulness, and then not to hunger and thirst for the privacy of the inner room where His presence may be realized and enjoyed apart from all intrusion of the outer world, is unthinkable. Communion with Christ is the imperative sequence of union with Him because alone with the Lord Jesus behind the closed door one may be both the man that he really is and the man that he longs to be. There he is in the presence of the One who knows what is in him and unto whose eyes "all things are naked and open," yet He is the faithful and merciful High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who is able to succour us who are tempted because He Himself hath suffered being tempted. So there alone with the God-man he may frankly and fully confess his sin, his failure, his defeat; and there in the intimate companionship of the victorious, triumphant Lord he may become more than conqueror. In the inner room, the sufferings and sorrows, the trials and tribulations, may be shared with

the One who will understand and sympathize. There in the inner room in fellowship with his Lord, new aspirations for higher and holier things will be begotten; there the ambition to "press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" will be quickened; there the determination to live habitually on the highest plane will be strengthened. And from that inner room one will emerge with a shining face even as Moses came from the mount of God. The Christian will always find the inner room the place of reciprocal communion.

Another thing drew the incarnate Son apart to pray. It was His need. Yes, we dare say it—the Son of man had no other way of replenishing His spiritual supplies save in prayer. In His earthly life He was utterly dependent upon His Father for wisdom, strength, power and guidance. Of Himself He said nothing, He did nothing, He went nowhere. The Source of divine supplies for Him was in Heaven and the method of their transmission from Heaven to earth was prayer. The Son of man in His representative capacity was limited to this medium of receiving supplies for His day's life and work. His own need drew Him into communion with His Father in Heaven.

"Because as he is, so are we in this world." So the Christian has no way of replenishing his ever diminishing spiritual supplies save in prayer. God gives His manna by the day. He would keep us utterly distrustful of self and wholly dependent upon Him—beneficiaries of His exhaustless bounty which can be obtained only as it is sought and claimed in prayer.

The source of supplies is in Heaven, the realm of need is on earth, the line of communication is prayer. Communion with Christ because of need is a necessary sequence of union with Christ.

Reciprocal communion between Christ and the Christian is an absolute necessity of a Spirit-filled life. Through prayer the Christian is enabled to breathe the exhilarating air of the heavenlies while surrounded by the enervating atmosphere of the world. Through prayer he is able to live in the uplifting, purifying presence of his Saviour while in constant contact with the deteriorating, defiling power of sin. Through prayer the new creation breathes in the very life of God which sustains the new life and maintains it upon the highest plane.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make—
What heavy burdens from our bosom take,
What parched grounds revive, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower:
We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel how weak; we rise how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

—R. C. Trench.

An Upper Room—Responsive Cooperation.

LUKE 6: 12–13, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and *continued all night in prayer to God.*

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them *he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;*"

Oh! what a momentous night that was in the world's history! What a stupendous decision confronted the Lord Jesus! A choice was to be made on the following day of those who would become linked with the God-man in the carrying out of that eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ for the salvation of mankind. Humanly speaking everything in the earthward side of God's wondrous plan of redemption hung upon that choice.

"He went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God." For Himself? No, this time that mountain top was not an inner room where He looked in upon Himself and His needs and then up to God for their satisfaction and supply, but it was an upper room where He looked out upon the world and its need and then up to God for the fulfilment of His purpose.

That night prayer was intercession. Throughout its hours the Son waited to receive the revelation of His Father's will and then responded through intercession to bring that will to pass in the lives of men. That night through intercession Jesus Christ linked Heaven with earth; He brought God in touch with man. Through intercession the choice of those twelve men, who were to become the very seed of the Church, was

made and they were set apart individually as apostles. Oh! what a night's work was that! Perhaps you and I are thousands of miles in space from that "upper room" on that Palestinian slope, and we are separated nineteen centuries in time from that night of intercession, yet the blessing that flowed from those hours will enrich our lives through time and through eternity.

To the God-man prayer was work; in fact, intercession was the most important work that He did. Greater in power than His preaching, His teaching or His healing was His praying. He commenced, continued and consummated everything in prayer. In the upper room He laid hold upon the supernatural forces of the unseen and brought them to bear upon the world in which men lived. Intercession was the most potential means of responsive coöperation with His Father in accomplishing the task He was sent to do.

Acts 1: 13–14, "And when they were come in, *they went up into an upper room,* where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,* with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with the brethren."

Acts 2: 1, 4, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all *with one accord in one place. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*"

Acts 2: 41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and *the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*"

" An upper room," " these all in prayer and supplication," " filled with the Holy Spirit," " added unto them about three thousand souls." A place of prayer, corporate intercession, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and three thousand souls saved through one sermon. Is there any reason why such a miracle of grace should not be wrought in the twentieth century as well as in the first?

I would speak a word to pastors. Has your church " an upper room " where men and women gather not to talk or to be talked to but to pray? Where, with all quarrels, divisions, jealousies put away, they with one accord wait upon God for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit not only upon themselves but upon the body of Christ the world over? Is the power of your preaching on Sunday generated in the prayer-meeting on Wednesday? Does every activity of the church reap fruitage that will abide through time and stand the test by fire in eternity (1 Cor. 3: 13) because it is begotten in prayer?

I know the prayer-meeting is considered old fashioned and that it is now either becoming obsolete or so decrepit through lack of virility as to be almost valueless in many churches. Just this week I heard a pastor in a large city full of churches say that he thought that church was perhaps the only one in the city which would observe the " World's Week of Prayer." But I know too, that the Church is losing its power; it is finding it difficult to even hold its own and in some places is resorting to all sorts of entertainments in an attempt to compete with the attractions

of the world. Do you desire to see a manifestation of first century power in your church? If so, are you willing to return to first century methods which will mean the revival of corporate intercession in your church?

I would speak a word to fellow-misssionaries. "Has your mission station 'an upper room' where doctors come from the hospital, teachers from the school, evangelists from the field, wives from the home, administrators from the desk to lay before the Lord of Heaven and earth the difficulties, problems and needs of the whole parish committed to you?

"What is the outstanding purpose of your life as a missionary? Is it to heal the sick? To teach school? To keep accounts or to keep a home? To preach the Gospel merely? No one of these things is an end in itself but each one a means to an end. What then is the purpose of your life and mine as missionaries? Jesus Christ tells us, 'Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that ye should go and *bear fruit* and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye should ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.' Jesus Christ said very little to His disciples about work but He said much about fruit-bearing. Upon that He put tremendous emphasis, even to making true discipleship depend upon it. In fact He said that only through much fruit-bearing can we glorify the Father. But work and fruit-bearing are by no means synonymous. Some of our work is the energy of the flesh, the working off of a surplus nervous energy or the dissipation of a limited supply of it.

But what is fruit-bearing? We shall know very clearly when some day we stand alone before Him with whom we have to do and render our account. Will it be the number of patients treated or pupils taught or meetings led or hours spent in interviews? No, God keeps but one kind of statistics. He only writes *names* in the book of life. It is not the output of our work but the fruitage of that output that counts with Him. A short time ago a missionary said to me, 'I have never worked so hard as I have this year and have never seen so few results. It is because I have prayed so little!' Oh! if we could but come to believe to-day that it is the bearing of eternal fruit and not the burning of nervous energy that God wants, we should see that intercession may, no must, have its God-appointed place in our lives." *

I would speak a word to parents. Has your home "an upper room"? Will your boy or girl carry out into life as his most priceless possession the prayers offered at the family altar? I know it is out of date. But I know too that juvenile crime is on the increase; that immorality is stalking through the land, robbing thousands upon thousands of boys and girls of the bloom of purity and leaving its black stain upon their souls; that there exists to-day a junior society for the aggressive promotion of atheism. Everywhere I see and hear that parents have lost both the confidence of and the control over their children. I wonder what "an upper room" with a family altar might do in your home! A few days ago a friend whose life is

* *Intercession and Evangelism,* a pamphlet by the Author.

deeply spiritual said that of all the formative influences in her Christian life the family prayers held daily in her home were the greatest. Four times in the book of Acts it is recorded that a whole household was converted and baptized at one time. (Will your family circle be unbroken in Heaven?) "Ye have not because ye ask not."

I would speak a word to each individual Christian. Have you "an upper room" in your life? Oh! I know you have "an inner room" where you pray for yourself and your family and your interests. But do you have "an upper room" where you intercede for others? Where you bear upon your heart the need of the whole world and remember in prayer all the Kingdom interests? A few weeks ago I met a radiant Christian. She had leisure from herself. She enjoyed living. She had not much money and had never gone far from her home city yet she was a citizen of the world through prayer. Her face fairly beamed as she said, "No one will ever know how much she can get out of a dollar until she has used it to buy twenty five-cent stamps!" For what use? On her heart were forty-four missionaries in different countries to whom she wrote and for whom she prayed. Her own life was immeasurably enlarged and enriched through intercession for these friends, most of whom she had never seen.

If you work in an office, a store or a factory, or teach in a school, could you not tithe your noon hour and give ten minutes to God for intercession? If you live at home and are able to control better your own

time could you not set aside a longer time as a free-will offering for prayer? If you have a kindred spirit among your friends could you not meet together once a week for intercession? "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

If you need help in the establishment of your "upper room" you would find it in such books as Andrew Murray's *Helps to Intercession* or Hugh McKay's *Prayer Cycle for World-wide Missionary Work.** But perhaps you would gain the greatest help from just following the instructions of the Bible on intercessory prayer and then make out your own list of objects for intercession.

JAMES 5: 16, "Confess your faults one to another, *and pray one for another,* that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

This is a command and a call to pray for our friends and for fellow-members of the body of Christ. Our knowledge of another's need is a call to prayer. I cannot tell you what tremendous encouragement and strength came to me this last year to learn from three Christian workers, all extremely busy men with many others on their prayer list whom they knew far better than they knew me, that they prayed *daily* for me.

"The weary ones had rest, the sad had joy,
That day, and wondered 'how,'
A ploughman singing at his work had prayed,
'Lord, help them now.'

*"Living Waters" Missionary Union, 14 Southfields Road, Eastbourne, Sussex, England.

"Away in foreign lands they wondered how
Their simple word had power.
At home, the Christians two or three had met
To pray an hour.

"Yes, we are always wond'ring, wond'ring 'how';
Because we do not see
Some one, unknown perhaps, and far away,
On bended knee."

2 THESS. 3: 1, "Finally, *brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified,* even as it is with you."

ROM. 15: 30, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, *that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;*"

Here is a call to prayer for the minister and for his preaching of the Word of God. Paul conceived the work of a church to be a sacred partnership between pastor and people through preaching and prayer. Is it possible that the paucity of results from the preaching of God's Word is largely due to the prayerlessness that accompanies it? Do you criticize your preacher? I wonder what would happen if that criticism were converted into prayer? When Mr. Spurgeon was asked for the secret of the power manifested in his ministry, he replied, "My people pray for me." "For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake and for the love of the Spirit," will you strive together with your pastor in your prayers to God for him?

EPH. 6: 18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplica-

tion in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and *supplication for all saints;*"

The life of many Christians is confined within its own denominational borders; often even narrowed down to the activities and interests of "my church." We repeat the creed "I believe in the communion of saints" but we practice it but little. Nothing would be so conducive to the dissipation of denominational jealousy, rivalry and overlapping of work and to the real unity of God's people of all tongues and tribes as "prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all saints." Will you begin to-day to pray for one of God's saints of another nationality in some distant country, in another state or province of your own country, in some city or town of your own state, in another church within your own city, in some family within your own church?

1 Tim. 2: 1–2, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made *for all men;*

For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

What a program for world-wide prayer God lays out for His Church in these words! What a call to His people to exercise their Christian priesthood! What a challenge to coöperate with Him in strengthening and sustaining those who are in authority in their endeavours to bring nations out of their existing confusion! Oh! what a change in condition might be

wrought in China to-day if the prayers of all God's people everywhere were focussed in believing intercession upon that nation! Andrew Murray says of 1 Tim. 2: 2, "What a faith in the power of prayer! A few feeble and despised Christians are to influence the mighty Roman emperors, and help in securing peace and quietness. Let us believe that prayer is a power that is taken up by God in His rule of the world. When God's people unite in this they may count upon their prayer effecting in the unseen world more than they know."

MATT. 9: 37–38, "Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few: *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.*"

If in Christ's time the harvest was plenteous, the labourers few and the need for prayer imperative, it is even more true to-day. More than nineteen centuries since He gave the commission to preach the Gospel *to every creature,* and there are still hundreds of millions who have never heard the Gospel! Still unoccupied fields, untouched classes, unreached tribes! How can we account for this except that God's people have failed to pray for labourers to enter into these harvest fields?

There are certain mission agencies that are making a serious attempt to secure and send missionaries to the unoccupied fields. There are national home missionary societies in various mission fields which are attempting the evangelization of their own people.

Will you not endeavour to acquaint yourselves with the work of such movements and then give yourselves in intercession for their needs? Will you not inquire into the need for labourers in the foreign and home missionary societies of your own denomination and then pray Spirit-taught, Spirit-filled, Spirit-anointed men and women out into these various fields?

Have we not clearly seen that union with Christ necessitates a life of prayer in this twofold aspect, reciprocal communion and responsive coöperation? In the "inner room" we meet Him, there He becomes our satisfaction and our sufficiency. And we go from it to our "upper room" to exercise our mediatorial, priestly ministry in bringing Him to be the Saviour and Satisfier of other men.

The Prerequisites for Prevailing Prayer.

All prayer is not prevailing prayer. It is not enough to pray, we need to pray in power. First let us consider the prerequisites for prevailing prayer on the manward side.

The first prerequisite is *purity of heart*. Only the Christian with a clean heart can pray the effectual prayer. Spurgeon has said, "The goal of prayer is the ear of God." If one cannot even get a hearing, he certainly cannot hope for an answer. Iniquity puts a closed door between the man who prays and the God who listens. Sin in the saint stops the ear of God so that He cannot hear.[1]

[1] Isa. 59: 1–2, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot

hear: *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*"

If a man is to pray right he must be right. God judges the prayer not by the petition upon the lips but by the purity of the life. Only the pure in heart can offer prayer to God with the assurance of its acceptability and answer.

2 Tim. 2: 22, R. V., "But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, *with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*"

Heb. 10: 22, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,* and our bodies washed with pure water."

The man who prays the effectual prayer must be right in his relationship both to God and to man. He must approach the throne with a conscience void of offence toward God and man (Acts 24: 16). If in his life there is sympathy for sin and apathy toward God, if there is indulgence of self and indifference toward God, if there is allegiance to Satan and disloyalty to God, then his prayer is not heard.

Ps. 66: 18, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart,* the Lord will not hear me."

If one would pray the effectual prayer he must be righteous in his relationship with his fellow-men. No pretence of piety will suffice to conceal the presence of dishonesty, greed, jealousy, resentment, unforgiveness

or hatred toward others. It has sometimes happened that a truly Spirit-filled man or woman has been shorn of all power in prayer and in preaching because of dishonesty in the handling of funds or because of some unrighteous action in relation to his co-workers.

JAMES 5: 16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of *a righteous man* availeth much."

MARK 11: 25, "*And when ye stand praying, forgive,* if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

A second prerequisite for prevailing prayer is *detachment of spirit*. True prayer is a spiritual exercise and its field of action is the heavenlies. It deals with the supernatural forces of the unseen world. To pray effectually one must be detached in spirit from the things of time and sense.

But such a thing seems well-nigh impossible in a world where the material, the tangible and the fleshly protrude themselves before one's eyes, press themselves into one's ears, and project themselves into one's life in such a way as almost to submerge and smother the aspiration for higher and holier things. Besides, almost everything in modern life tends to rob one of the solitude which is so essential at times if one is to keep a keen realization of the presence of God. The apartment house instead of the old-fashioned home puts a whole community into one's front yard; the automobile makes the man in a distant city one's next door neighbour; and the telephone and the radio enable the

whole world to enter one's home day and night at will. To be alone is almost a unique experience; to be wholly detached in spirit, even when alone, is far from an easy matter.

But the man who has power with God in prayer must be alone sometimes. Attachment to God and to things eternal and spiritual demands deliberate detachment from the things of earth and sense. The Son of man deliberately withdrew from the sights and sounds of the life that surged about Him that He might find the solitude of spirit that prepared Him for prayer.

LUKE 5: 15–16, "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And *he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed.*"

Scripture in its teaching on fasting offers the spiritual man a suggestion regarding a method by which he may secure the detachment of spirit needful for effectual prayer. Fasting connotes two things both of which are essential to vital spirituality, self-denial and discipline.

There are things in the life of every Christian which are perfectly legitimate but which may have a dulling, deadening influence upon the spirit. There are other things which are right in themselves but which often are used in excess and so crowd out more important things. To keep the spirit alert, untrammeled, usable, it must be disciplined through denial. Is not this the essence of fasting? Food is a legitimate thing, even a

necessity, yet may not the spirit often have been hindered in the performance of its tasks through the sluggishness of the body caused by overeating? Friends are a legitimate part of one's life. They are a necessity in a normal, balanced life, yet may not many of us have been robbed of power because we have spent more time with them than with the divine Friend? Our recreation and our reading are essential to the health of body and mind yet may we not have become impoverished spiritually because of ill-proportioned time given them?

Did not Jesus Christ intimate that the disciples were impotent to cast the foul spirit out of the epileptic because they were unwilling to forego a meal or to deny themselves the companionship of family and friends.

MARK 9: 29, "And he said unto them, *This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*"

The football player, the mountain climber and the soldier in action know the meaning of self-denial and self-discipline. But very few Christians take seriously enough the race into which they have entered or the warfare in which they are engaged. Too few are willing for the sacrificial living which victory over the enemy demands. "It is love of our lives that weakens our spirits, and makes us unfit for the fight." God needs prayer-warriors to-day who have within them the spirit of the Apostle Paul who cared more for the victorious completion of his life's ministry than for life itself.

ACTS 20: 24, "But none of these things move me, *neither count I my life dear unto myself,* so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

A third prerequisite for prevailing prayer is *definiteness of aim.* Much prayer is very desultory, often forgotten as soon as offered and calls forth no watchful waiting for an answer. We aim at nothing and get what we aim at. There has been no definite petition and so there is no definite answer.

But God invites us to come to Him with clear cut petitions and teaches us to focus our prayer on particular needs. "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" was Christ's word to blind Bartimæus by the roadside as again and again he cried out his prayer, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." "*What* wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Definitely came the answer, "Lord, that I might receive my sight. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." God honours a definite prayer with a definite answer. "Every prayer should be with the mind, *a definite desire;* with the heart, *a longed-for need;* with the will, *a claimed petition;* with faith, *an accepted gift;* and with thanksgiving, that praises for *the answer that is assured.* This cleanses the petition list from all generalizing in prayer and gives reality to praying and to receiving."

JOHN 14: 13–14, "And *whatsoever* ye shall ask in my name, *that* will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask *anything* in my name, *I will do it.*"

The book of the Acts gives repeated instances of definite answers to definite petitions. But one will be cited. Peter and John had been called into question by the Sanhedrin for the miracle performed on the man born lame and had been threatened and charged to speak no more nor teach in the name of Jesus. They immediately engaged with their fellow-Christians in prayer. The prayer was not long nor was it full of generalities. It focussed on their one outstanding need.

ACTS 4: 29, 31, "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants *that with all boldness they may speak thy word.* . . . And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and *they spake the word of God with boldness.*"

A fourth prerequisite of prevailing prayer is *intensity of desire.* God has given us a very gracious promise in Ps. 37: 4, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee *the desires of* thine heart." Do we take in fully the magnitude of the responsibility of this promise? How much and what do we desire? "Ye have not because ye ask not," for "If ye ask—I will do." God frankly says that His doing is limited by our asking: it is dependent upon our desire.

But even when we do ask we often do not want the thing asked for sufficiently to persevere until it comes. Prevailing prayer calls us to persistent perseverance and patient waiting in intense desire until the answer comes.

ROM. 12: 12, "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; *continuing instant in prayer.*"

COL. 4: 2, "*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same* with thanksgiving."

Scripture gives us some very wonderful instances of this intensity of desire in prayer. The children of Israel had fallen into gross idolatry while Moses was upon the mount with God. Their sin weighed heavily upon his heart. He alone stood as mediator between them and the righteous judgment of God. Witness the sacrificial vicariousness of his intercessory prayer.

EXODUS 32: 31–32, "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh! this people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and *if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.*"

The same intensity of desire is in the prayer of the Apostle Paul for his kinsmen according to the flesh. His heart's desire was their salvation and he wanted it so much that he could even wish himself outside the fold of Christ if they could be within.

ROM. 10: 1, "Brethren, *my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*"

ROM. 9: 2–3, "That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren,* my kinsmen according to the flesh."

Such intense desire did David Brainerd have for the salvation of the ignorant, savage Indian tribes to whom

he carried the Gospel. He said, "I wrestled for the ingathering of souls, for multitudes of poor souls, personally, in many places. I was in such an agony from sun half an hour high until dark that I was wet all over with sweat." Dr. Jowett rightly said, "True intercession is a sacrifice, a bleeding sacrifice, a perpetuation of Calvary, a filling up of the suffering of Christ. Unquestionably if our intercession blesses it must bleed." How much do we really care for the salvation of the unsaved members of our family? for the unsaved friends in our social circle? for the unsaved millions in the mission fields? How intensely do we desire to see a genuine revival in the Church? Is our desire keen enough to call us to sacrificial, mediatorial intercession and to keep us continuing in it until the answer comes?

A fifth prerequisite in prevailing prayer is *the daring of faith.* God makes staggering promises to the man of prayer. He says "*Whatsoever we ask,* we receive of him" (1 John 3: 22). "*If ye shall ask anything,* in my name, I will do it" (John 14: 14). "Ye shall *ask what ye will,* and it shall be done unto you" (John 15: 7).

As we face such stupendous statements as these we are compelled to ask, "Does God really mean what He says? If He does, is He really able to fulfil such promises? If He is, what does it require of us?"

God really means that if you and I fulfil the conditions He so clearly states in connection with the promises which He has made that He will fulfil the promise. The God of truth cannot lie.

TITUS 1: 2, "In hope of eternal life, which *God, that cannot lie,* promised before the world began."

God is most assuredly able to fulfil every promise which He has made. Listen to the testimony of those who had put God's faithfulness to the test and had proved both His faithfulness and His power. "God is faithful" (1 Cor. 10: 13) and "God is able" (2 Cor. 9: 8).

JOSH. 23: 14, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, *that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath* failed thereof."

1 KINGS 8: 56, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: *there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised* by the hand of Moses his servant."

Then what do such promises require of us? They require the daring of faith. God calls us to take every promise at its face value. He asks us not to drag His promises down to the plane of our unbelief but to lift our faith up to the plane of His promises.

ROM. 4: 20–21, "*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith,* giving glory to God; And *being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*"

God challenges us to put Him to the test. He dares

us to command the Himalaya, that rears up between Himself and us or between Himself and the one for whom we pray, to be removed and to be cast into the sea and He makes the daring of faith the only condition for the achievement of such a miracle.

MARK 11: 23, R. V., "Verily I say unto you, *Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea,* and *shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it.*"

Will you enter to-day, my friend, into a new prayer-partnership with your Lord? The power is His: the faith is yours. Through the daring of faith will you link yourself with the omnipotence of power and bring down from Heaven above not only into your own life but into the life of the whole body of Christ "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

EPH. 3: 20, "Now *unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,* according to the power that worketh in us."

We have considered the prerequisites for prevailing prayer on the man-ward side. We have been at the foot of the ladder, which connects earth with Heaven, looking up. May we now go to the top of the ladder and look down. From the viewpoint of the throne of grace what are the conditions of prevailing prayer? Scripture reveals three qualifying phrases accompanying God's gracious promises.

To be heard and answered prayer must be *accord-*

to God's will. Does this statement need to be gued or expounded? Is it not a self-evident fact that God could not grant any petition that is not in accordance with His will? We have learned in the earlier chapters of this book that it is God's purpose that man should think, love and will within the circle of God's will. This, assuredly, means that he must pray within that sphere if his prayer reaches the ear of God. There is a limit then to what we may ask of God and the God-man stated the condition very clearly in the thrice-repeated prayer in Gethsemane, "Not my will but thine be done." Only he who has willed to do the will of God will be able to pray aright.

But there is another side to this. St. Augustine has stated it in these words, "O Lord, grant that I may do Thy will as if it were my will, so that Thou mayest do my will as if it were Thy will." It is possible for Christ and the Christian to live in such abiding oneness that God does the will of His child which is expressed in his prayer.

JOHN 15: 7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask *what ye will,* and it shall be done unto you."

And we may be so assured of the answer that we can praise Him before we may have received in actual experience the thing prayed for.

1 JOHN 5: 14–15, "And *this is the confidence that we have in him,* that, *if we ask anything according to his will,* he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, *whatsoever*

we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

"When we do what He bids, He does what we ask! Listen to God and God will listen to you. Thus our Lord gives us '*power of attorney*' over His Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, if only we fulfil the condition of abiding in Him." *

To be heard and answered prayer must be *in the name of Christ*. No sinner, not even a saved one, has ever made any deposit in the bank of Heaven consequently he has no right to open an account in his own name. The spiritual riches which are there for him were placed there through the death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The account was opened for him when he put his faith in this Saviour and at that moment Christ placed in his hands blank checks signed with His own name and not one of them has ever been refused at the bank of Heaven. Six times in that last conversation with His disciples on earth the Lord Jesus told them that when He went back to the Father He would open an account for each one of them and urged them to make liberal use of His credit in their Father's bank. He taught them that the Father hears but one Voice, that only the man in Christ can reach the Father's ear with his petitions.

JOHN 14: 13–14, "And whatsoever ye shall ask *in my name*, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. . . . And if ye shall ask anything *in my name*, I will do it."

* *The Kneeling Christian*, by an Unknown Christian, page 79.

JOHN 15: 16, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father *in my name,* he may give it you."

JOHN 16: 23–24, 26, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name,* he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing *in my name:* ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "At that day ye shall ask *in my name:* and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: "

But do not let any one be deceived into thinking that these are magic words which can be added, as an appendage, to any kind of a prayer. It is only the prayer that will bring honour and glory to His name that can be truly asked in His name. A wrong prayer cannot be made right by the addition of some mystic phrase. It is possible for one to pray in the name of Christ for the salvation of some member of the family in order only that there may be greater harmony in the home. Or a preacher may pray for large additions to his church not for the glory of Christ's name but for his own. There must be identification with Christ in His interests and purposes if there is to be a rightful use of His name in prayer. Only the prayer that is wholly according to God's will can be legitimately asked in the name of Christ.

To be heard and answered prayer must be *in the Holy Ghost.* The Holy Spirit alone knows what is the mind and will of God; He only understands what prayer will be to the honour and glory of Christ. So only the man who is in the Spirit's sphere and under the Spirit's control will pray aright.

JUDE 20, " But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, *praying in the Holy Ghost.*"

ROM. 8:26–27, R. V., " And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: *for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us* with groanings which cannot be uttered: And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, *because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*"

In these two passages of Scripture we see that the divine condition of prevailing prayer becomes at the same time the divine provision for it. We do not know how to pray as we ought but the Holy Spirit does know. Indwelling and infilling us He reveals to us our need, suggests the objects of prayer, sifts and tests our motives, purifies our desires, stiffens our faith and stimulates our hope and expectation of an answer.

Do you honestly wish to live your life habitually on the highest plane? Then you must become a man or woman of prayer, an intercessor after God's heart. Are you willing to let the Holy Spirit deal with you in regard to the actual condition of your prayer life *as it now is?* Will you through the power of His divine enabling determine *what it shall be?*

Has my prayer life been *powerless* because of some besetting sin?

Has my prayer life been *hindered* by haste, irregularity, indefiniteness, insufficient preparation, unbelief, neglect of Bible study?

Has my prayer life been *fruitless?* Have I had such power with God that I have had power with people? Have I had definite answers to prayer week by week?

Has my prayer life been *restricted* merely to short, stated seasons of prayer or have I come to know what it is to "pray without ceasing"?

Has my prayer life been *limited* to prayer for myself? My family? My work? My church? My mission? Or have I taken the world into my heart and into my prayers?

Has my prayer life been *starved?* Or have I devoted time to the study of God's Word about prayer? Do I know His precepts and promises?

Has my prayer life been *joyless?* Do I love to pray? Or is prayer more of a duty than a delight?

Has my prayer life been *growing?* Do I daily know more of the meaning and power of prayer?

Has my prayer life been *sacrificial?* Has it cost me anything in time, strength, vitality, love?

"Lord teach us to pray."

VIII

THE WORKS OF THE SPIRITUAL MAN

SALVATION, sanctification, service is the divine order in spiritual experience. The man who is saved from sin and set apart unto God must serve God and his fellow men in working to bring them into the same spiritual oneness which he enjoys. The Christian's individual relationship to God merges into a corporate relationship with the other members of God's family and the other citizens of God's Kingdom and then stretches on out toward "the other sheep" whom the loving Shepherd longs to bring into His fold.

TIT. 2: 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works.*"

2 TIM. 3: 17, "That the man of God may be perfect, *thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*"

TIT. 3: 8, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, *that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.* These things are good and profitable unto men."

Works are the natural outcome of faith. Belief in Jesus Christ is not a hollow profession nor a selfish possession. Faith that is real must propagate itself and share its blessing. The apostles Paul and James are not at loggerheads with each other; they are not stating contradictory but complementary truth as they

emphasize in turn the necessity of faith and of works. The virility of any true faith is shown in its works.

JAMES 2: 17–18, R. V., "Even so *faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.* . . . Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and *I by my works will show thee my faith.*"

Works are the natural outcome of love. Love for the Lord Jesus is not shallow sentiment that dissipates itself in words but it is vicarious sacrifice that expresses itself in works. The vitality of true love is shown in service. "Lovest thou me?" "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Then, "Feed my lambs."

1 JOHN 3: 16, 18, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we *ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* My little children, *let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*"

Works are the natural outcome of life. The tree is known by its fruits. Life in the tree presumes fruit on the branches. Life in Christ Jesus must reproduce itself in life.

JOHN 15: 2, "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away;* and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

ACTS 4: 20, "For *we cannot but speak* the things which we have seen and heard."

Faith, love and life are not passive but active forces and the proportion in which they exist in the believer will determine the part he takes in the work of Christ's body, the Church. The spiritual man recognizes that the very possessions and privileges which are his in Christ entail responsibilities and duties in the work which Christ desires done in the world.

But no man of himself should determine the nature of his service any more than he can determine the nature of his salvation or of his sanctification. His works are also foreordained of God. It is only the man who does a divinely determined and directed work who is promised the power of God in its accomplishment.

EPH. 2: 10, "For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained* that we should walk in them."

God works according to a definite plan which is rooted in an eternal purpose. In the eternity of the past He foresaw the tragedy of sin and all of its evil consequences and formed the purpose which determined the plan by which sin and its accompanying evil would be removed. That plan took into account the conditions to be met in every age, in every century and in every generation of mankind's history, and stretched itself over them all. There is nothing new to God in this twentieth century "modern mind" that either surprises or appals Him for He has known it all before the foundation of the world.

EPH. 3: 11, "*According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

ACTS 15: 18, "*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*"

God's purpose centers in Christ and concerns itself with two things only, the redemption of man and the reconciliation of all things in the universe unto Himself. The salvation of man and the sovereignty of God are the two vital issues at stake and upon their accomplishment God's purpose focuses.

Salvation through a Saviour is God's only plan for the redemption of man. God sent His Son into the world to be a propitiation for its sins.

2 TIM. 1: 9–10, "*Who hath saved us,* and called us with an holy calling, not according to our own works, but *according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ,* who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

1 JOHN 4: 14, "And we have seen and do testify that the *Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*"

1 JOHN 4: 10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and *sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*"

God's remedy for the world's revolt against Him and its reconstruction through His restoration to sovereignty over it centers in Christ also; not however in Christ the Saviour but in Christ the King. Through the incarnation He became a Saviour who in the ulti-

mate fulfilment of God's eternal purpose was to become a King of whose Kingdom there would be no end (Luke 1: 30–33).

In the fulfilment of His purpose God has a divine order. He accomplishes His task and achieves His goal by stages. The history of God's dealings with man is divided into clearly defined "ages" or periods of time. The scope of this book confines us to the consideration of God's work in this age and the one to come. These two stages are set forth in one passage in the Acts.

> Acts 15: 14–17, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people for his name.* And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David,* which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: . . . *That the residue of men might seek after the Lord,* and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

In God's plan there are two advents of Christ into this world for two distinct purposes and marking off two distinct ages. In each advent God works through His Son to carry out His purpose for the whole world. In this study we are considering God's purpose in Christ for this age, the period between Christ's first and second advent.

In this age God is not working for the reformation of the world nor to put the world right, much as that is needed, but to bring man into a right relationship

to His Son. The improvement of conditions in human society has no share in the plan of God for this age. In fact this would run absolutely counter to His purpose in the Saviourhood of His Son for such a scheme would make this world so comfortable a place in which to live that the natural man in his ease and contentment would feel no need whatever for God and would have no thought for the life to come. God is not working to right the wrongs of a world that still hates and rejects His Son.

Besides, the only possible road to the real reformation of society is through the regeneration of the individual. Sin is the cause of every bit of the suffering and sorrow in the world and the only place where sin is removed is at the Cross of Calvary. "The uplift of humanity" depends upon the uplifting of the Christ of the Cross. The reformations that have been wrought in the world are the by-product of the work of the Church. Scripture does not tell us that the mission of the Church in this age is the reformation of the world.

Neither is God working in this age for the conversion of the world. God frankly says "that the whole world lieth in the evil one," that Satan is "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4: 4 R. V.) and that it is in the control of "the prince of this world" (John 14: 30). Many passages of Scripture show that "the course of this world" is to grow worse and worse in the last days. One needs only to keep in mind what we have learned in previous studies about the world to see how its very nature precludes the thought of its conversion in this age of grace.

The world is "the flesh" in its corporate capacity. The only place God can meet it is at the foot of the Cross and the only way in which the world could be converted would be by the cleansing of its sin in the atoning blood of Christ the Saviour.

But nowhere in the Word of God is there intimation that the whole world ever will come to the Cross for that purpose. The whole mass of unbelieving mankind is one vast federation under Satan's leadership and will continue so unto the very end of this age.

1 JOHN 5: 19, R. V., "We know that we are of God, and *the whole world lieth in the evil one.*"

EPH. 2: 2, "Wherein in time past ye walked *according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air,* the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

2 TIM. 3: 1, 13, "This know also, that *in the last days perilous times shall come.*

But *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse,* deceiving and being deceived."

Up to the very end of this age there will be both believers and unbelievers, those who will receive and those who will reject Christ the Saviour. At the end of the age the harvest will reveal both wheat and tares in the field; both good and bad fish in the net. The parable of the wicked husbandmen, as given by Christ Himself, shows that the attitude of the world throughout this age continues to be one of hatred and hostility.

ACTS 28: 24, "And *some believed* the things which were spoken, and *some believed not.*"

MATT. 13: 30, "*Let both grow together until the harvest:* and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, *Gather* ye together *first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*"

MATT. 13: 48, 49, R. V., "Which when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down, and *gathered the good into vessels,* but *the bad they cast away.* . . . *So shall it be in the consummation of the age:* the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous."

God in this age is calling out from the world the Bride of Christ that she may be prepared to meet Him at His coming and to reign with Him in the Kingdom age which is to follow. God is calling individuals out of this present evil world, emancipating them from it and crucifying them to it.

JOHN 15: 19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but *I have chosen you out of the world,* therefore the world hateth you."

GAL. 1: 4, "Who gave himself for our sins, *that he might deliver us from this present evil world,* according to the will of God and our Father."

God's plan is in line with His purpose. This plan is the evangelization of the world. Through the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the whole world as a witness God wishes to give every creature the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as his Saviour. This is the primary meaning of His last commission.

LUKE 24: 46–47, "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And *that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations,* beginning at Jerusalem."

MARK 16: 15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and *preach the gospel to every creature.*"

JOHN 6: 40, "And this is the will of him that sent me, *that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him,* may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

Having formed this purpose and having fashioned this plan God now has no other way of working. In giving His Son to die God has done all that He can do for this world.

1 COR. 3: 11, "For *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*"

ACTS 4: 12, "*Neither is there salvation in any other;* for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

God's plan of working throughout the entire course of this age is perfectly outlined in the Acts. Here we see the invisible Head of the Church in the heavenlies determining and directing the work of His visible body on earth through His Executor and Administrator, the Holy Spirit. Every type of work in which He would have us engage as Christians to-day is revealed to us there. Let us now consider the nature of the spiritual man's work.

God's Work in this Age is Executed through a Divine-human Partnership.

Life in Christ necessarily involves identification with Him in His mission to this world. Real membership in Christ's body means sharing with Him His compassionate love for the world and going out into it to seek and to save the lost. As Christ was sent into the world by the Father for a definitely specified task even so are we sent by Him.

John 17: 18, "As thou hast sent me into the world, *even so have I also sent them into the world.*"

John 20: 21, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: *as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*"

What Christ Jesus began as the incarnate Son, He continues as the exalted Lord, through the divine-human partnership which exists between Him and His body, the Church.

1 Cor. 3: 9, "*For we are labourers together with God:* ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

2 Cor. 6: 1, "*We then as workers together with him,* beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

Mark 16: 20, "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, *the Lord working with them.*"

The Christian, then, is not at liberty to choose what his work will be. He is under the direction of the Head of the body of which he is but one member. As

the Father determined the work of the Son and as Christ executed everything according to His Father's will so the Lord Jesus now chooses and calls the workers and then determines and directs the work. From this viewpoint let us study together the work of the first century Church, that we may discern our part in this divine-human partnership.

The workers were *chosen of God.* Paul and Peter each had the conviction that they had been chosen by the Lord Himself for their particular task even before receiving His call. Hence the courage of that conviction which was evinced in all their work.

Acts 9: 15, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: *for he is a chosen vessel unto me,* to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

Gal. 1: 1, "Paul, an apostle, (*not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father,* who raised him from the dead.)"

Acts 15: 7, "Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, know ye how that a good while ago *God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.*"

The workers were *called of God.* It is considered somewhat out-of-date to-day to speak of a divine call. The term is well-nigh obsolete. Not a divine call, but a sociological appeal takes many a man into the ministry or to the mission field. But the lack of it quite as often takes him out of the ministry into business or out of the mission field when the romance of an ocean trip and of meeting a new people has given place to

the daily routine of hard work in an uncongenial environment. But the ministers and missionaries of that early Church were so sure of their call that they would lay down their lives willingly, if need be, in the pursuit of it (Acts 20: 24).

Acts 13: 2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work *whereunto I have called them.*"

Acts 13: 47, "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, *I have set thee* to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

The workers were *appointed by the Lord.* The men of the early Church had a direct appointment to a specific task by the Lord Jesus. To them it was a life task—to be laid down only when called into a higher ministry in the immediate presence of their Lord. Is not the reason why so many young men abandon their theological studies before completing their course due to the fact that they were not "put into the ministry" by the Lord Himself? The Church suffers to-day from man-made ministers.

Acts 26: 16, "But rise and stand upon thy feet: for *I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness* both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee."

Acts 20: 24, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so *that I might finish*

my course with joy, and *the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus* to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

1 Tim. 1: 12, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, *putting me into the ministry.*"

The workers were *sent by the Lord.* Having been chosen and called they were also commissioned by the Lord. With the assurance and authority of a sent-one these first century ministers and missionaries went forth. Laymen, also, like Ananias were divinely commissioned for service.

Acts 22: 21, "And he said unto me, Depart: *for I will send thee* far hence unto the Gentiles."

Acts 9: 17, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, *the Lord, even Jesus,* that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, *hath sent me,* that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

Every Christian is needed somewhere in some kind of work in God's vineyard. Every Christian has been ordained to some task by God. Every member of Christ's body has been set in his position as an eye, an ear, a hand or a foot so that the Head may work through him for the accomplishment of some particular task. Only as every member of the body is functioning properly can the work of the Head be perfected.

1 Cor. 12: 14, 18, "For *the body is not one member,* but

many. But now *hath God set the members every one of them in the body,* as it hath pleased him. *If they were all one member, where were the body?"*

EPH. 4: 11–12, "And *he gave some,* apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; . . . *For the perfecting of the saints, and the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."*

Not even the weakest, the youngest, nor the apparently most ignorant and incapable is left without his share in God's work. In fact, God delights to choose those who in themselves are impotent and inadequate in order that the glory of achievement may be altogether His.

1 COR. 12: 22, "Nay, much more *those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary."*

2 COR. 4: 7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, *that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."*

The Lord Jesus determines and directs the work of those whom He has chosen and called. As we study the various phases of the work of the early Church we shall see that the whole field of Christian activity was adequately covered. In the accomplishment of the evangelization of the world the Holy Spirit gave every believer something to do and He set some apart for tasks which required special gifts.

There were witnesses in the first century Church. In fact, this was the primary work of each. The Holy

Spirit came not upon a select group on the day of Pentecost but upon each one of the one hundred and twenty that each might be a witness.

Acts 2: 32, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof *we all are witnesses.*"

Acts 13: 31, "And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, *who are his witnesses unto the people.*"

Who is a witness, and of whom, and of what, does he witness? It is very essential to understand this if one would grasp the importance and the power of this form of Christian work. A witness is one who tells what he has *seen* and *knows*.

Acts 22: 15, "For thou shalt be *his witness* unto all men *of what thou hast seen and heard.*"

Of whom did those in the early Church witness? The power of the Holy Spirit was given only to those who witnessed of Christ Jesus. From the beginning to the end of Acts we see them witnessing in all places and unto all classes of people of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 1: 8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and *ye shall be witnesses unto me* both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Acts 23: 11, "And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for *as thou hast testified of me* in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

Of what concerning Christ did they witness? Invariably they witnessed not to His work in the flesh but to His work on the Cross and from the throne. They told others not of "the Jesus of history" but of the Christ of Calvary.

Acts 3: 15, "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; *whereof we are witnesses.*"

Acts 5: 30–32, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. . . . Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. . . . *And we are witnesses of these things;* and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

There were preacher-pastors in the first century Church.

Acts 20: 28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, *over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,* to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Definite instructions given them regarding what they were to preach were followed implicitly. They preached *the Word of God.* Will you glance through the book of the Acts and note the number of times it is said that they preached the Word? Will you note also its marvellous power both of attraction and conviction? Multitudes, even whole cities, came to the place of worship, not to see a pageant nor to hear a concert nor a discussion of some notable book nor

a moralization of current topics nor a rhetorical discourse, but to hear the Word of God. And wherever the Word was preached sinners were convicted, converted and baptized by ones and twos, by hundreds and thousands.

Acts 8: 4, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere *preaching the word.*"

Acts 13: 44, "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together *to hear the word of God.*"

They preached *the Gospel.* The Gospel is the heart of the Word of God. Take away the Gospel, which is "that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," from the Word of God and you have nothing left but the walls of a gutted building. The core of every sermon, the heart of every message delivered by those first century preachers, was the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was this Gospel that pricked the hearts and consciences of men and made them cry out, "What must I do to be saved?"

Acts 8: 25, "And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and *preached the gospel* in many villages of the Samaritans."

The preachers of the early Church were not ashamed of the Gospel. They had proven its power in their own lives and knew the miracle it had wrought. They had the compelling conviction that the preaching of the

full Gospel of Christ was the only means of changing either the sinful life of an individual or the corporate life of human society.

ROM. 1: 16, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:* for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

They preached *Christ*. If the Gospel is the heart of the Word, Christ is the heart of the Gospel. The men of that day knew the Jesus of Nazareth, Cana and Capernaum far, far better than any theological historian of the twentieth century, and how they could have entranced their audiences with stories out of His earthly life! How sweet and precious must have been their memories of the years of fellowship with Him! What countless sermons Peter and James and John could have preached about the Jesus who healed the daughter of Jairus, who was transfigured on the mount and who prayed in the garden of Gethsemane! But "the Jesus of history" was not the theme of their sermons. What pain and anguish of heart must have been mingled with every remembrance of Him as they recalled their faithlessness in the hour of His deepest need; of the cowardly denial in the presence of His enemies; of the traitorous desertion at the Cross; and of the doubt and disbelief at the tomb. It was not to the incarnate Son but to the crucified, risen, ascended, exalted Son to whom they owed their deliverance from sin, self and Satan. It was this Christ and Him only whom they preached.

Acts 5: 42, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and *preach Jesus Christ.*"

Acts 9: 20, "And straightway *he preached Christ* in the synagogues, *that he is the Son of God.*"

Glance again rapidly through the book of the Acts to note the result of the preaching of the Christ of the Gospel of the Word of God. The divine record tells of conversions, baptisms, additions to church membership of individuals, of households, of multitudes of men and women from all classes of society.

Let us take but a few illustrations of the marvellous power of such preaching. The Ethiopian eunuch believed and was baptized when Philip preached Christ to him from Isa. 53: 7–8 (Acts 8). The Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus believed when he heard the doctrine from the mouths of Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13). The households of Cornelius, the Gentile centurion (Acts 10); of Lydia, the business woman (Acts 16); of the unnamed Philippian jailor (Acts 16) and of Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18), all were convicted of sin, converted and baptized through the preaching of the Christ of the Gospel of the Word.

Acts 6: 7, "And the word of God increased; and *the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly;* and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

Acts 4: 4, "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and *the number of the men was about five thousand.*"

There were evangelists in the first century Church. Philip was an evangelist and went from place to place preaching the Gospel. While much of the preaching in the early Church was without doubt apologetic, yet there is equal evidence that much of it was evangelistic both in content and in method. The appeal was to the heart and to the will as truly as to the mind and to the conscience, and the audiences were warned and exhorted as well as instructed and edified.

Acts 21: 8, "And the next day . . . we entered into the house of *Philip the evangelist,* which was one of the seven."

Acts 2: 40, "And *with many other words did he testify and exhort,* saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation."

There were teachers in the first century Church. The early Church was thoroughly indoctrinated. New converts were taught the Word of God. Not only were the fundamental truths preached but they were taught to the whole Church. Need we any further proof of this than the Epistles which were written to these churches?

Paul's conception of the ministry was that it should be a teaching as well as a preaching ministry. He returned to the places where he had won converts in his missionary tours and sometimes stayed one or two years teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus. The last word spoken of him in the Acts tells us he was in his own hired house teaching about Jesus Christ.

Acts 18: 11, "And he continued there a year and six months, *teaching the Word of God among them.*"

Acts 19: 10, "And this continued by the space of two years; so that *all which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus,* both Jews and Greeks."

The apostles of the early Church considered it a definite and essential part of their ministry to establish and confirm the Christians in their faith, to encourage and strengthen them in their work, and to feed and foster their spiritual life.

Acts 16: 5, "And *so were the churches established in the faith,* and increased in number daily."

Acts 15: 41, "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, *confirming the churches.*"

Acts 18: 23, "And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, *strengthening all the disciples.*"

Not the statistics of church membership but the spiritual status of church members was Paul's concern. He desired passionately that those whom he had begotten in the Gospel might be presented perfect in Christ Jesus. To that end he not only taught them but he warned, reproved and rebuked the Christians under his care.

Col. 1: 28, "Whom we preach, *warning every man,* and *teaching every man* in all wisdom; *that we may present every man* perfect in Christ Jesus."

There were personal workers in the first century

Church. The passion of the early Church was to win men to Christ. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" was its slogan (1 Cor. 9: 22). Tremendous emphasis is laid upon the importance of personal soul winning by the fact that in three consecutive chapters in the Acts wonderful examples of this type of work are given.

The evangelist Philip was taken from a very successful evangelistic campaign in Samaria to the desert of Gaza to win one man. The Ethiopian eunuch was returning from Jerusalem to his home with a scroll of the prophet Isaiah which he was reading eagerly but without understanding. Philip entered his chariot, explained to him the passage and from it preached Christ. And the eunuch believed and was baptized (Acts 8: 36–38).

Acts 8: 35, "Then *Philip* opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture and *preached unto him Jesus.*"

Paul had seen the Lord of glory on the road to Damascus and had fallen before Him believing but blinded; emptied but unfilled. In Damascus was Ananias, the layman. His name appears but once in the annals of Scripture but it is in connection with a bit of personal work that shines upon the page of Scripture as the north star shines in the heavens, for through him as God's own sent messenger Paul receives his sight and is filled with the Holy Ghost. The work of salvation begun by the Lord of glory was consummated by his call to sanctification and to service through Ananias.

Acts 9: 17, "And Ananias went his way and entered into the house: and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, *the Lord,* even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, *hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*"

In Cæsarea was Cornelius, the centurion, a man with a devout heart and a deep hunger for God. In Joppa was Peter, a man with a passionate passion for souls and a life surrendered to his Lord for service. And in Heaven was God who works at both ends of the line sending a prepared messenger to prepared souls. The result was a whole household won to the Lord (Acts 10).

Personal testimony was another form of work in the first century Church. Who can estimate the fruitage of Paul's testimony of his conversion before the multitude and before Agrippa (Acts 22, 26).

The ministry of intercession was practiced by the first century Church. To the first Christians intercession was a working force. When Peter and John were threatened because of the healing of the lame man they gave themselves to prayer. When Peter was imprisoned "prayer was made without ceasing." Through praise and prayer Paul and Silas not only opened prison doors but the fast closed hearts of the Philippian jailor and his household. Through prevailing intercession those feeble men and women defeated and routed Satan and his hosts and again and again gained for the triumphant Lord of glory a visible manifestation of His victory on Calvary. They worked through prayer.

Acts 12: 5, "Peter therefore was kept in prison: *but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*"

Acts 16: 25, "And *at midnight Paul and Silas prayed,* and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."

The grace of giving was manifest in the first century Church. Filled with the Holy Ghost love for God and for their fellow men led the first disciples to lay all they possessed at His feet for His use. The offers of the early Church were not filled by a finance campaign but by the free-hearted consecration of his material possessions to the Lord on the part of every Christian.

Acts 4: 32, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: *neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own:* but they had all things common."

Administrators of the business affairs of the Church were to be found in the first century Church. But these men were not chosen because of their social prestige, their financial income, or their executive ability, but they chose men full of honesty, of wisdom, of faith and of the Holy Ghost. It was a spiritual task to which they were called which required spirituality in those who undertook it.

Acts 6: 3, "Wherefore, brethren, *look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,* whom we may appoint over this business."

Good works were part of the activities of the first

century Church. The practical expression of the love of Christ in kindly deeds for the relief of physical and material needs and for the amelioration of suffering is the natural product of vital spirituality. The genuinely spiritual man is the first to feel the touch upon the hem of his garment and to give most liberally of his sympathy and his support to those in need. The early Church had its "Dorcas" and more than once is it recorded that it sent relief to God's children.

ACTS 9: 36, "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called *Dorcas: This woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.*"

ACTS 11: 29, "Then *the disciples,* every man according to his ability, *determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea.*"

The life of the spiritual man is one full of beneficence because "the fruit of the Spirit is kindness." He delights in playing the part of the good Samaritan, he revels in carrying cups of refreshing water.

GAL. 6: 10, "As we have therefore opportunity, *let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*"

MARK 9: 41, "For *whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name,* because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

TIT. 2: 7, "*In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works:* in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity."

There were missionaries in the first century Church.

No church can lay claim to true, apostolic succession which is not missionary in purpose, passion and program. The early Church was essentially a missionary Church. The power of God was upon it in an exceptional way because it gave itself in obedience to the fulfilment of Christ's last commission to carry the Gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. Persecution sent those first Christians everywhere preaching the Word of life.

Acts 8: 1, 4, "And Saul was consenting unto his death. *And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem;* and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Therefore *they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.*"

Acts 11: 19–20, "Now *they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution* that arose about Stephen *travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch,* preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. . . . And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, *when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians,* preaching the Lord Jesus."

There were martyrs in the first century Church. The testimony of Stephen was sealed with martyrdom. How true it was that "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." By the laying down of this faithful life in triumphant death Stephen no doubt did more toward winning Saul of Tarsus to Jesus Christ than he ever could have done in a lifetime of preaching. Paul's conscience was seared by the haunting vision of that victorious death and by the remembrance

of his part in it—Stephen though dead, continued to speak to Saul.

ACTS 7: 58, "And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and *the witnesses laid down their clothes at the young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*" . . . "And Saul was consenting unto his death" (Acts 8: 1).

ACTS 22: 20, "And *when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death,* and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

The work of the first century Church bears upon it the seal of God and the scars of Satan. The seal was power and the scars were persecution. Loyalty in preaching the Christ of the Gospel of the Word drew down from Heaven the supernatural power of God and it raised up from hell Satanic persecution. Study the book of Acts and you will see these two invariably in inevitable succession; power in preaching Christ produced persecution of the Christian and persecution of the Christian precipitated power from Christ.

ACTS 5: 14, 16, 17–18, "And *believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.* . . . *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about* unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: *and they were healed every one.* . . . *Then the high priest rose up* and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) *and were filled with indignation,* . . . *and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.*"

ACTS 14: 1–2, "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went back together into the synagogue of the Jews, and

so spake that *a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed. . . . But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.*"

The work of the early Church was all-comprehensive. The God-man who inaugurated it knew every need of human life and planned adequately to meet and to satisfy it. Though conditions have changed, the fundamental need of human life does not vary from one century to another. The task of the Church at the very beginning was cast into an age-long mould by Christ Jesus and He has given no indication on down through the centuries of any deviation from His purpose and plan so clearly revealed in Scripture.

But no one can look upon the Church to-day without seeing that it has departed very far from both the purpose and the plan of God. The leaders of Christendom frankly state that the work of the Church is not to save souls but to salvage society so they have given themselves deliberately to "the purification of Sodom" rather than to "the proclamation of the Saviour." From pulpit and press they declare that "the mission of the Church is to make the world better," and "to interpret to the world the principles of Christ," so that it may win the world into living by His teachings and into following His principles. The supreme question before present-day Christendom is not man's relationship to God's Son but man's relationship to human society; the paramount issue is not God's sovereign reign in righteousness and peace over a world brought into reconciliation with Him through

His Son, but it is the equalizing and solidifying of nations, races and classes through foisting upon them for their acceptance the dogma of the Fatherhood of God, whom they do not acknowledge as Father, and the brotherhood of men, whom they do not accept as brothers.

The leaders of Christendom frankly state that they preach such a "social gospel." And any one, who scans the sermon themes for Sunday in the newspaper, or who studies the subjects announced on the church calendar, has no reason to doubt their word on this point. The marvel is that with such special emphasis on social betterment themes "the world" is not more rapidly approaching the desired millennium of righteousness and peace. "The world" at heart really does not want to be "made better" so it is not going to the place where it will be coaxed or coerced into a reformation of its conduct. It will greatly appreciate anything which the Church does to make its life in sin more full of comfort and will even assist in the matter by making liberal contributions to financial drives or "community chests." But "the world" is not overtaxing the seating capacity of the churches which preach the "social gospel." When "the world" seeks entertainment it usually prefers to have it in its native haunts and its natural setting rather than to have it adulterated and spoiled by an admixture of religion. The "social gospel" is not filling but rather emptying the churches and many are concerned as to what new attractions can be offered to drag "the world" to church.

Let us honestly face the actual condition of the present day pulpit and pew. God still has His " seven thousand " who have not bowed to the worship of " twentieth century scholarship," who are not devotees at the shrine of " the modern mind " and who will not deify man and humanize God. Praise God that throughout the whole world there are thousands of preachers, evangelists, teachers and missionaries who still preach the Christ of the Gospel of the Word of God and there are millions of laymen who believe that Gospel and who hold inviolate the whole Word of God.

But on the other hand there is a growing number of preachers, teachers and missionaries who to-day do not preach or teach the Christ of the Gospel of the Word of God. The Christ they preach is " another " Christ, the gospel is " another " gospel and the Bible is " another " Bible.

The reformation of the whole world which the " social gospel " purposes does not need the Saviour of the Cross, for man is to be his own saviour. To preach the Christ of the Cross and of the throne is to leave the realm of the practical and descend to the plane of the doctrinal, the modern teacher reasons. He declares that the world has outgrown this. But to win the world from its naughty ways and to teach it the right " way of life " he does feel the need of an example to hold up before it and of ethical precepts and principles which it can follow. The preacher of the " social gospel " can find no greater example and no better teacher than " the Jesus of history " so he does make use of Him in this capacity.

The reformation of the world which the modern preacher advocates has no place in it for the Gospel of the Word of God which is a Gospel of salvation from sin through a crucified, risen, ascended, exalted Lord. In fact the "social gospel" decries having any creed. It declares that its emphasis is on love rather than on faith and that the important thing is not what a man believes but what he is. It does not concern itself with the building of a solid foundation but only with the ornamentation of the roof. If the structure has a lovely, attractive roof garden with sweet music, fragrant flowers, captivating eloquence and happy companionship why have any anxiety over the fact that the foundation is made of sand? The "social gospel" ignores the fact so plainly revealed in Scripture that the divine order is invariably faith and then love, and that it is an absolute impossibility to build the superstructure of a spiritual life on anything but the solid foundation of a crucified, risen Saviour. So the "social gospel" is plainly not "the Gospel of Christ."

The reformation of the world which the modern pulpit so earnestly advocates has no place in it for the Scriptures as the Word of God. "The modern mind" finds it impossible to accept the Bible as such. The Bible cannot be rejected altogether for then the modern preacher would on the very face of it have to leave the evangelical pulpit immediately. But "the modern mind" finds a middle ground of compromise which it hopes the evangelical Church will be tolerant and loving enough to accept. It admits that the Bible "contains the Word of God" and modestly claims that

it has been ordained by twentieth century scholarship to tell the pew what parts of it are the Word of God and what parts are not.

Such an arrogant assumption makes the true believer who loves the Bible and who believes that from Genesis to Revelation it is "the Word of God," as God Himself says it is, seek to know what this "modern mind" really is and from whence it got the authority to handle the Book of books in any such fashion.

So one goes to the Bible itself to see if he can run down this "modern mind" that he may know where and how to classify it. He finds only two types of "mind" mentioned; "the mind of Christ" and "the carnal mind." In Phil. 2: 5–11 he finds that "the mind of Christ" believes and accepts Christ as the eternal Son, the One who was equal with God because He was God; the incarnate Son who emptied Himself of His divine glory and humbled Himself by entering into this world through the virgin's womb, thus becoming Man; the crucified Son who in obedience to His Father's will went to the death of the Cross; the ascended Son who hath been exalted to the Father's right hand and given a name above every name; the kingly Son before whom every knee shall bow some day and every tongue shall confess that He is Jesus Christ the Lord. "The mind of Christ" cannot be "the modern mind" which denies and rejects in whole or in part these glorious truths concerning the Lord Jesus.

Then it must be "the carnal mind." But "the carnal mind" is as old as Eden. The only way we

can discover whether the self-styled "modern mind" is really the antiquated "carnal mind" dressed in the disguise of twentieth century scholarship is to take its finger prints. That will be adequate proof. "Hath God said?" "Ye shall not surely die." "Ye shall be as gods." Doubt and disbelief of God's Word; denial of God's Word; and deification of man and man's intellect! No further evidence is needed. This threefold finger print marks "the modern mind" as "the carnal mind" which is enmity toward God, and His arch antagonist. The Bible of the modern preacher is "another" Bible and not "the Word of God."

Such an appalling condition in the pulpit inevitably creates an equally appalling condition in the pew. The people in many churches to-day are starved; they are like the famine sufferers, having to live on shrubs, bark, husks and fodder. Probably the Church was never so perfectly organized as it is to-day, yet it is pitifully ineffective before its tremendous task. The apostasy in the pulpit has created dwindling congregations, doubting Christians and drifting churches. The Church has drifted so far back toward the world that ofttimes the boundary line between the two spheres is almost indiscernible. Worldly policies are resorted to in the conduct of the affairs of the Church; worldly methods are employed to attract people to attend its services; worldly entertainments are given them after they come. Whatsoever a church soweth, that shall it also reap. There is a tragic harvest of thoroughly worldly churches in Christendom to-day.

Let us come back to the individual Christian's re-

sponsibility for the kind of work he does as a member of the body of Christ. The works of every believer in Christ will be judged and he will receive or lose his reward according to the kind of work which he has done. If he has built a superstructure upon the foundation of the pure Gospel that is gold, silver and precious stones, then his work will abide. But, if he has fashioned the superstructure out of the wood, hay and stubble of "another gospel which is not the gospel" (Gal. 1: 6–7) then his work will be burned. It will not stand the test of the fire of God's judgment.

1 Cor. 3: 8, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and *every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.*"

2 Cor. 5: 10, "For *we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;* that every one may receive the things done in his body, *according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*"

1 Cor. 3: 11–15, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. . . . Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; *Every man's work shall be made manifest:* for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. . . . *If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. . . . If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss:* but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

It is a terrifically solemn thought that in the work which we do we are either the tool of Christ or of

Satan and that in the message we give we are either the mouthpiece of Christ or of the devil.

ROM. 6: 13, "*Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:* but yield yourselves unto God, as those alive from the dead, and *your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*"

MATT. 16: 23, "But he turned and *said unto Peter, Get thee behind me Satan:* thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

But there is no need for any Christian to be ignorant of the kind of work that abides nor will he have any excuse to present to Christ at the judgment seat if he does the kind that must be burned. God has given us the pattern in His Book and has bestowed upon us the power in His Spirit to accomplish our part in this blessed partnership. If we fail to do, it will be because we have failed to discern.

God's Work in this Age is Accomplished through Supernatural Power.

The works of the incarnate Son were supernatural and beyond the power of any man to accomplish in himself. Those who tried to copy or to counterfeit them failed miserably. Yet He told His disciples that they were to do the same works and even greater. It is truly a supernatural task which Christ gives the Christian to do. Bringing spiritually dead men to life and making them into the image of the Son of God is in deed and truth a task beyond human power.

JOHN 14: 12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, *the works that I do shall he do also; and even greater works than these shall he do;* because I go unto my Father."

In the last clause of this wonderful promise He gives a clue as to how they were to be empowered for such a work. "Because I go unto my Father." By His return to Heaven supernatural power to do supernatural tasks was to be transmitted to them. Let us follow this clue until we find the secret.

After His crucifixion and resurrection and immediately preceding His ascension He gives to His disciples the commission in which He makes mention of this power. He tells them three things: first, that all power in Heaven and upon earth resides in Him; second, that they will be endued with this power; third, that they will receive this power through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

MATT. 28: 18, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All power is given unto me in heaven and upon earth.*"

LUKE 24: 49, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be *endued with power from on high.*"

ACTS 1: 8, "*Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.*"

The crucified, risen, ascended, exalted Lord in whom dwells all power in Heaven and upon earth Himself lives in all the fulness of His supernatural power in the believer through the infilling and anointing of the

Holy Spirit. Some one has tersely said, "Calvary creates the worker; Pentecost empowers him."

The disciples and apostles of the first century Church were equipped and energized to do "the greater works" by the limitless power of God through the fulness of the Holy Spirit.

ACTS 4: 8, "Then, *Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost,* said unto them, ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel."

ACTS 13: 9, "Then, Saul, (who is also called Paul,) *filled with the Holy Ghost,* set his eyes on him."

ROM. 15: 18–19, "For I will not dare to speak of any of *those things which Christ hath not wrought by me,* to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, . . . Through mighty signs and wonders, *by the power of the Spirit of God:* so that from Jerusalem, and round about into Illyricum, I have freely preached the gospel of Christ."

1 THESS. 1: 5, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, *but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost,* and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."

The same power bestowed by the same Person is open to every disciple of the twentieth century Church for the accomplishment of the same God-given task. Is that power yours to-day? Have you been anointed by the Holy Spirit? Are you doing "the greater works"?

IX

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF THE SPIRITUAL MAN

NO man can live unto himself. Every man has a corporate as well as an individual life. God has ordained that we live in families, neighbourhoods, nations and races, nevertheless the whole human race is a unit and each person is a unit within a unit.

God intended that between the units in this vast organism there should be perfect adjustment. Godliness, holiness and righteousness were the fundamentals upon which God meant human society to be built.

But sin entered and as we have seen, cosmos became chaos. Maladjustment distorted every relationship; first, between God and man; second, within man's own being; third, between man and man. In God's original creation the divine order was God, others, oneself. Sin completely reversed this. Selfishness supplanted love. To-day the whole fabric of human society is threatened. Family life is being rent in twain by divorce of parents and disobedience of children; communities are agog with frightful crimes and civic corruptions; nations and races are at war at heart, if not in fact. Family, civic, national and international life is shot through and through with division.

The only hope for readjustment within human so-

ciety rests in a return to God's original order. In Christ and in Him alone can man come into a right relationship with God, with himself and with his fellow men. In Christ all dislocations in relationships may be set right and there may be a reproduction of moral order in which the processes of disintegration and degeneration may cease. Life on the highest plane both demands and provides for such readjustment.

The Christian life is a fellowship which is rooted in faith and nurtured by love. The soil out of which it springs is faith in God. The atmosphere in which it thrives is love for God, out of which is begotten love toward man. This divine order is irreversible. It is impossible for one to have a love for his fellow man with sufficient power to conquer the innate selfishness of his own heart apart from faith in God. It is utter folly to preach "the brotherhood of man" to those who do not know "the Fatherhood of God" through a new birth based on faith in the cleansing blood of a Saviour.

Primacy is always given in Scripture to man's relationship to God; his relationship to man is secondary and dependent. Godliness is an essential precedent to righteousness. When men have become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ then they become brothers in the Lord. This is the only "Fatherhood of God" and "brotherhood of man" which Scripture sanctions and which works out in practical experience. After Paul calls himself Christ's apostle then he calls himself Timothy's brother.

Col. 1: 4, "Since we heard of *your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which we have to all the saints.*"

Philemon 5, "Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast *toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints.*"

Col. 1: 1, "Paul, an *apostle of Jesus Christ* by the will of God, and Timotheus *our brother.*"

Let us then consider the Christian's corporate relationships in their divinely appointed order.

The Spiritual Man's Relationship to God.

Life on the highest plane demands a radical reversal in man's affections. The natural man lives unto himself because he loves self supremely; the spiritual man lives unto God because he loves God supremely.

2 Tim. 3: 2, 4, "For *men shall be lovers of their own-selves, . . .* Traitors, heady, highminded, *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*"

2 Cor. 5: 15, "And he died for all, *that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him* which died for them, and rose again."

God's love bridged the gulf between the natural and the spiritual man. "God *so loved* that he gave his only begotten Son." His gift was the measure of His love. He gave His best, His all. He gave the costliest gift in His treasure-house, the crown jewel of Heaven. Such love comprehended by faith conquers the rebellion of the will and constrains the heart to love Him who first so loved us. Our love for Him is rooted in His love for us.

1 JOHN 4: 9–10, "*In this was manifested the love of God toward us,* because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. . . . *Herein is love not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son* to be the propitiation for our sins."

1 JOHN 4: 19, "*We love him, because he first loved us.*"

The spiritual man not only loves God more than he loves himself but also more than he loves any other one. His love for God is paramount. It is so far above the love he has even for his own kith and kin that it is in a class by itself.

MATT. 22: 37–38, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with all thy heart,* and *with all thy soul,* and *with all thy mind.* This is *the first* and great *commandment.*"

MATT. 10: 37, "He that *loveth father or mother more than me* is not worthy of me: and he that *loveth son or daughter more than me* is not worthy of me."

When the Christian becomes a son in God's family thereafter his first filial obedience and love is to be given to his heavenly Father. This does not mean for one moment that God discounts the human love of parent for child or child for parent or friend for friend. On the contrary God commands both parental and filial love, and experience proves that when one loves God supremely all human love is both enhanced and enriched. To the heavenly Father His child not only owes the gift of physical life through creation but he owes the still more priceless gift of spiritual life through re-creation. This makes him far more of

a debtor to God than he is even to his earthly parents, and parents and children alike should acknowledge with joy the primacy of their relationship to God.

But this is not always so and oftentimes the hardest place to live one's Christian life is in the home and one's greatest enemies are those of his own household. One knows many instances of heart-breaking experiences and well-nigh intolerable situations caused by the ridicule, opposition and persecution of Christians by members of their own family. Many a boy or girl has been disowned by parents for no other reason than that he became a Christian! Many a young person has had to go to the mission field over the wishes of parents or friends. To have chosen to do the will of God when it went counter to the will of loved ones has been the severest test in Christian experience. But God has never failed to honour love that expresses itself in sacrificial obedience to Himself. And Christ knows how to sympathize with and to succour all who are so tested. He met opposition in His own family and His mother and brothers tried to dissuade Him from the path that led to Calvary. This action called out from Him that remarkable statement that those children of God who were united in doing the will of their heavenly Father were more closely bound together than those who are put together by family ties. The blood of Christ unites His own by a tie that supersedes that made through human blood.

MATT. 10: 36, "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

MATT. 12: 50, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, *the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*"

Strength to suffer and to endure, to bear and to forbear will be given to the one who gives Christ the supreme place in his affections. God will cause him to triumph and to be a sweet savour of Christ unto Him in every place. Love to God, preëminent and paramount, is rewarded by victory and fruitage. His love in us manifested even in silence will be like a light shining in a dark place.

2 COR. 2: 14–16, R. V., "But thanks be unto God, *who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of his knowledge in every place.* . . . For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that are saved and in them that perish; . . . to the one a savour from death unto death; to the other a savour from life unto life."

The relationship of the spiritual man to God is marked also by loyalty. By virtue of sonship in God's family he has citizenship in God's Kingdom. Loyalty to his heavenly country and to the interests of his Father's Kingdom takes precedence over citizenship in his earthly domain and supersedes the nationalism which is earth-born.

While acknowledging that "the powers that be are ordained of God," while submitting obediently to the laws of the country in which he lives, while taking his full responsibility for support of that government during his sojourn on earth, yet the man who lives his life

on the highest plane discerns clearly that his real home center is in the heavenlies and that his first allegiance must be to the Kingdom of God.

TIT. 3: 1, "*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates,* to be ready to every good work."

ROM. 13: 1, "*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.* For there is no power but of God: *the powers that be are ordained of God.*"

PHIL. 3: 20, R. V., "*For our citizenship is in heaven.*"

The spiritual man must acknowledge the sovereignty of his Lord over all other rulers. To him Christ Jesus is already the King of kings and the Lord of lords and his prayer to the Father invariably breathes forth the intense desire to see God's sovereignty extend from sea to sea until His will is done on earth as it is in Heaven.

1 TIM. 1: 17, "Now *unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God,* be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen."

MATT. 6: 9–10, "After this manner therefore pray ye: *Our Father which* art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. . . . *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*"

The Christian serves his Master in an official capacity. Disloyalty is treason. He is a servant of the Lord of Heaven and God requires uncompromising faithfulness in a servant. He is a soldier in the army of Christ

and a soldier dare not be enmeshed in entangling alliances. He is an ambassador of the King at the court of a foreign country and an ambassador must maintain absolute loyalty to the statutes of his own country.

Rom. 1: 1, "Paul, *a servant of Jesus Christ,* called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."

2 Tim. 2: 3–4, "Thou therefore endure hardship, *as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. . . . No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life;* that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

2 Cor. 5: 20, "Now then *we are ambassadors for Christ,* as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

An ambassador of Christ has definite instructions from his Sovereign and he cannot act independently of them. He has had committed unto him the Gospel of Christ as a sacred trust and loyalty to Christ requires loyalty to this Gospel.

1 Tim. 1: 11, "According to *the glorious gospel of the blessed God,* which was committed to my trust."

Rom. 15: 16, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, *ministering the gospel of God.*"

Some of the religious leaders in Paul's day had departed from the faith. They would not endure sound doctrine and resisted the truth to such an extent that Paul openly called them blasphemers. They had made shipwreck of their faith and were busily engaged in trying to steer the ship of other men's lives onto the same rocks.

2 Tim. 3: 8, "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, *so do these also resist the truth:* men of corrupt minds, *reprobate concerning the faith.*"

1 Tim. 1: 19–20, "Holding faith and a good conscience; *which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:* Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, *that they may learn not to blaspheme.*"

Paul wrote to the young minister who was his son in the faith urging him to loyalty to his Lord. He pointed out to Timothy the fallacy of the scholarship of that day, which was the cause of this departure from the true faith, and warned him to have nothing to do with it but to give himself afresh to a study of the Word.

1 Tim. 6: 20–21, R. V., "O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, *turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called; . . . which some professing have erred concerning the faith.*"

2 Tim. 2: 16–18, R. V., "But *shun profane babblings:* for they will proceed further in ungodliness, . . . *and their word will eat as doth a gangrene:* of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; . . . *men who concerning the truth have erred,* saying that the resurrection is past already, and *overthrow the faith of some.*"

2 Tim. 2: 15, "*Study to show thyself approved unto God,* a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

Paul also warned the little flock at Ephesus and the whole Church under his care of the grievous wolves and

the false hirelings who would enter in among them to draw the flock away from the Shepherd. He faithfully exposed these men and their seductive methods in his Epistles to the churches.

ACTS 20: 29–30, "For I know this, that after my departure shall *grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock: . . . also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*"

2 COR. 11: 13–15, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.* . . . And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. *Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*"

Paul declared that these men were guilty of bringing division into the Church. When they departed from the faith of the Gospel instead of separating also from the Church that had preached and taught this Gospel from its inception, and establishing an organization upon their new tenets, they did the very unethical thing of remaining within the Church and of attempting to gain control over it. Though teaching a doctrine contrary to that which the Christians had been taught yet they apparently used such a vocabulary that it would be difficult for their simple-hearted hearers to detect its falseness. They ensnared many through genial manners and fair words. Such was the beginning of apostasy.

ROM. 16: 17–18, R. V., "Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark them that are causing the divisions* and occasions of stumbling, *contrary to the doctrine which ye learned;* and turn away from them, *For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ,* but their own belly; and *by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.*"

COL. 2: 4, 8, "And this I say, *lest any man beguile you with enticing words. . . . Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,* after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Under the inspiration of the divine Spirit Paul foretold the apostasy that would sweep throughout the entire professing Church and would eat at its very vitals. Into a veritable whirlpool of doubt, disbelief and disloyalty multitudes would be drawn.

1 TIM. 4: 1–2, R. V., "But *the Spirit saith expressly, that in the later times some shall fall away from the faith,* giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, *through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies,* branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron."

2 TIM. 4: 3–4, R. V., "*For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine,* but having itching ears, *will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; . . . And will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.*"

No Spirit-taught student of the Word of God and of the universal condition of Christendom doubts that the day of this prophesied apostasy is already upon us. In the churches of the mission field as well as in those of

the homelands this declension from the true faith and this disloyalty to Him who is the Truth is in every day evidence.*

To-day many religious leaders in all parts of Christendom have departed from the faith and are openly in revolt against the truth. They will not endure sound doctrine but are actively declaring war upon the foundational truths of Christianity. Just last week a minister, still occupying an evangelical pulpit, was assisting in the ordination of a Unitarian minister. On that occasion he made this pronouncement, "The Church is in revolt against Fundamentalism and Puritanism," which means that he is openly in favour of Liberalism and License. Such men are at heart unitarian because they deny every truth of the Word which makes the Lord Jesus Christ the unique Son of God. Their place is entirely outside the evangelical Church and, if they practiced even the most elementary principles of the ethical gospel which they preach, they would pack up their ecclesiastical belongings, depart from the evangelical pulpit, and establish themselves either with their unitarian brethren or seek virgin soil in which to plant their tares.

But they have no intention whatever of leaving the evangelical pulpit, rather they purpose deliberately to stretch forth their hands and stealthily lay hold upon

* In China about twenty-five hundred missionaries, representing all denominations and nationalities, united in a Bible Union as a testimony before the native Christians of their loyalty to Jesus Christ and to His Word, and as a protest to the inroads of Modernism, into a field where for more than one hundred years the pure Gospel seed had been sown and nurtured by thousands of missionaries loyal to Christ and to His truth.

the entire machinery of the Church both at home and upon the mission field and secure its control. They usually are such adepts in the manipulation of language that through the use of "good words and fair speeches" (Rom. 16: 18) they deceive even the true people of God. They preach sermons filled with the rankest poison but sugar-coated with sweet words and eloquent phrases, patronizing the Jesus of history. Only those who have the discernment which the Holy Spirit alone gives detect the deception. And, when the men and women who love their Lord better than they love their own lives cry out in protest against such high-handed dishonesty, they have the blatant effrontery to charge them with bringing division into the Church and to accuse them with a lack of love.

The conflict between Fundamentalism and Modernism is dividing organized Christianity in twain. There are some who live near the border line of both camps who earnestly desire neutrality between these opposing forces. They plead for unity; they plan for union; they pray for unanimity. But those who live at the headquarters of both camps know that this can never be. The only unity which the Bible enjoins is "the unity of the Spirit" which is based on "one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God."

Such unity is not something which we attempt to "make" but rather is something already created by the Holy Spirit which we "keep." Such unity does not "become" for it "is" wherever there is oneness in Christ Jesus. This and only this is the unity for

which our Lord prayed and which He expects of His children.

EPH. 4: 3–6, "*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace. . . . There is *one body*, and *one Spirit*, even as ye are called in *one hope* of your calling; *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God* and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Such unity can never exist between Fundamentalism and Modernism for they are as far apart as darkness and light, as death and life. Let me quote from an editorial of *The Christian Century:* "The God of the Fundamentalist is one God; the God of the Modernist is another. The Christ of the Fundamentalist is one Christ; the Christ of the Modernist is another. The Bible of Fundamentalism is one Bible; the Bible of Modernism is another. The Church, the kingdom, the salvation, the consummation of all things—these are one thing to the Fundamentalist and another thing to the Modernist. Which God is the Christian God, which Christ is the Christian Christ, which Bible is the Christian Bible, which church, which kingdom, which salvation, which consummation are the Christian Church, the Christian kingdom, the Christian salvation, the Christian consummation? The future will tell. You may sing 'Blest be the tie' till doomsday, but it cannot bind these worlds together."

Thus according to the testimony of Modernism itself we see that between Fundamentalism and Modernism a great gulf is fixed which nothing or no one can

bridge. The issue admits of no neutrality. Loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ demands that every Christian study to know and declare himself either for or against the Christ of the Fundamentalist or the Christ of the Modernist. In such a conflict as this silence is cowardice, nay, it may even be construed to be desertion and treachery. Loyalty to God in these difficult days of deepening apostasy calls every Christian to three things; discernment, devotion and division.

Christians should be able to discern between false and true teaching even when the former is given in its most subtle form, so that there shall not be the slightest deviation from the truth of God's Word. It is not enough to believe God's truth, we are to " walk " in it.

2 JOHN 1–4, " The elder unto the elect lady and her children, *whom I love in the truth;* and not I only, but also *all they that have known the truth; . . . for the truth's sake,* which *dwelleth in us,* and shall be with us forever. . . . I rejoiced greatly that I found of *thy children walking in truth,* as we have received commandment from the Father."

3 JOHN 3–4, " For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of *the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.* . . . I have no greater joy than to hear that *my children walk in truth.*"

Discernment requires watchfulness; it required a continuous prayerful study under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit of God's Word and a careful comparison of what one hears and reads with what one studies. Paul told the Ephesian elders that from among them-

selves men would arise speaking perverse things to draw men away after them and cautioned them to watch and to remember his warnings.

ACTS 20: 31, 32, "*Therefore watch,* and *remember,* that by the space of three years *I ceased not to warn every one* night and day with tears. . . . And now, brethren, *I commend you to God and to the Word of his grace,* which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

He warned Timothy to be on his guard continuously against false teaching and unsound doctrine.

2 TIM. 4: 3, 5, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; . . . And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. *But watch thou in all things,* endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

He warned the Christians against deception and urged them to become adults in the faith that they might always be able to discern the false and the true.

EPH. 5: 6, "*Let no man deceive you with vain words:* for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

EPH. 4: 14, "*That we henceforth be no more children,* tossed to and fro, *and carried about with every wind of doctrine,* by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, *whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*"

Loyalty to the Lord Jesus demands devotion to the

truth at any cost as the Holy Spirit has taught us. When men and women everywhere are departing from the faith, possibly even members of our own family and our friends, God asks of us a faithfulness to the faith of our fathers that beats no retreat.

2 Tim. 3: 14, "*But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of,* knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

2 Tim. 4: 7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith.*"

1 Cor. 16: 13, "Watch ye, *stand fast in the faith,* quit you like men, be strong."

2 Tim. 1: 13, "*Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me,* in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

Devotion to Jesus Christ calls us to a loyalty to truth that brooks no neutrality. It even challenges us to take our place in the front ranks and "to fight the good fight of faith."

1 Tim. 6: 12, "*Fight the good fight of faith,* lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called, and *hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*"

Jude 3, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and *exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith* which was once delivered unto the saints. . . . *For there are certain men crept in unawares,* who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, *ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

There is a pseudo-union in Christendom to-day that is tantamount to dishonouring disloyalty. Its slogan is "For the sake of peace we must have union even at the cost of truth." It bids the Fundamentalist sit silently while the Modernist seeks and secures control of the machinery of the Church both at home and abroad. If he protests he is accused of being divisive.

As one studies the Gospel of Matthew he will find a place where the Lord Jesus Christ made a definite, deliberate break with the men who had wilfully rejected Him. There was a clean-cut cleavage between Him and the religious leaders of that day and He withdrew from them and from that time on devoted Himself exclusively to those who were His own.

We have not only His example but we have the clear teaching of Scripture to guide us in this very delicate and difficult matter. God calls His children into complete separation from all those who are traitors to the truth. He commands His loyal ones to have no fellowship with them and not to be partakers of their sins.

1 Tim. 6: 3–5, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; . . . He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, . . . Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, *from such withdraw thyself.*"

2 John 9–11, "Whosoever transgresseth, *and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ,* hath not God. He that abideth

in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. . . . *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:* For he that biddeth him God speed is *partaker of his evil deeds.*"

Such loyalty to the Lord Jesus is bound to mean suffering to the man or woman of sensitive spirit. It will incur a persecution as real as anything endured by the Christians of the first century, even though of a different nature. The Intellectuals of the twentieth century consign the Conservative to the slums of scholarship and the worldlings regard him as an antique. But for the joy that is set before him the Fundamentalist endures the ignominy and reproach of the Cross.

2 TIM. 3: 12, "Yea, and *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*"

2 TIM. 1: 8, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner: *but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.*"

The Spiritual Man's Relationship to Fellow-Christians.

A right adjustment to God necessitates a right adjustment with all to whom God is related. Coming into God's family brings one into relationship with other members of that family as brothers and sisters. God is love so love is the atmosphere of the home in the heavenlies.

1 JOHN 4: 8, 12, "*God is love. . . . If we love one another, God dwelleth in us,* and *his love is perfected in us.*"

The love of the children for one another is rooted in the love of God. His heart of love is reflected in the heart of each because His very nature, which is love, is imparted to each one at the new birth. The proof of God's indwelling in the believer is his love for the brethren. Unlove or hatred toward a brother or sister in the family of God is incontrovertible proof that the love of God does not dwell in one. The love-nature is shown in a love-life.

1 JOHN 4: 7, "Beloved, *let us love one another* for love is of God; and *every one that loveth is born of God* and knoweth God."

1 JOHN 3: 14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life *because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*"

1 JOHN 4: 20, "*If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother he is a liar:* for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

Obedience in the family life of God requires love for one another. The law of Christ is love upon the very highest plane—the plane of the Cross. There on Calvary in laying down His life in death for those who were not only sinners but rebels the Lord Jesus manifested love at its highest and purest. It is love of this same nature and extent that Christ commands Christians to have. The Cross of Christ is to be both the

birthplace and the pattern of the love which brethren are to bear one to another. Rooted in a love that has its life-blood flowing from the Cross the spiritual man's life becomes adjusted to that of every other member of God's family.

JOHN 13: 34, "*A new commandment,* I give unto you, *That ye love one another; as I have loved you,* that ye also love one another."

JOHN 15: 12, "This is my commandment, *That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*"

Then love for one another in the family of God is not optional but obligatory. To love one another as Christ hath loved us rests upon a divine "ought." There is no escape and no excuse.

1 JOHN 4: 11, "Beloved, if God so loved us, *we ought also to love one another.*"

1 JOHN 3: 16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: And *we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*"

This spiritual adjustment between fellow-Christians is revealed in the inner circle of fellowship by unity and in the touch with the outer world by solidarity.

Unity in the inner circle of the Father's family life is the very heart of the Son's High-Priestly prayer. In church circles to-day there is much emphasis laid upon union. All kinds of associations and federations are being formed. There is an attempt on a vast scale to bring about a universal consolidation of denomina-

tions, and even a federation of the two bodies into which the visible Church is divided—Protestant and Catholic.

But there is a vast and crucial difference between union and unity. According to Webster's dictionary union means "junction; coalition; combination," while unity means "a state of being one, oneness, agreement, harmony." Union is junction; unity is conjunction. Union is coalition; unity is concord.

The unity for which our Lord prayed was not a forced union, worked up and organized by man, based on common ideas and ideals, but it was a spontaneous oneness which grew inevitably out of the sharing of a common life—the life of Christ Himself. Christ prayed that the disciples might be one *even as* He and the Father were one. The significance of that "*even as*" is tremendous; it is descriptive and explanatory. It describes a unity that is based not on organization but on organism; it is not a union of denominations or of communions but it is a welding into essential oneness of those who are drawn together magnetically as it were, by the power of the supernatural life indwelling each. "Father, thou in me and I in them that they may be made perfect in one." It is the unity of spirit with spirit through oneness in Christ Jesus.

JOHN 17: 21, 23, "*That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:* that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. . . . I in them, and thou in me, *that they may be made perfect in one.*"

GAL. 3: 28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: *for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*"

Such unity is based on a common, clearly-defined relationship to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and it is "kept" through a mutual, right adjustment to the Spirit.

EPH. 4: 4–6, "*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace. There is *one body,* and *one Spirit,* even as ye are called in *one hope* of your calling; *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God* and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Such unity comprehends a universal brotherhood of men on the ground of a blood tie. They who are separated as far as the east is from the west by racial antagonisms and prejudices, by national division and friction, by personal suspicion and hatred, are made one by the blood of Christ. Enmities are put away at the Cross and those who were far apart are made nigh by the blood of a common Redeemer.

The synchronizing into one of people from the two great divisions of the human race—Jew and Gentile—through faith in Jesus Christ, as recorded in the book of Acts, is one of the great supernatural achievements of the ascended Lord. Through the shed blood of their common Saviour Jew and Gentile were made fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body of Christ. Typifying the racial divisions and international antipathies of the present day they show us the only possible way to world peace.

EPH. 2: 14–16, "*For he is our peace, who hath made both one,* and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; . . . *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity,* even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances; *for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making* peace; . . . And that he might reconcile both unto God *in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby.*"

Such unity comprehends far more than just "the Fatherhood of God" and "the brotherhood of man." It goes infinitely deeper. Trusting in the blood of Christ for salvation Christians are baptized into the body of Christ, and each member is united to every other member in an organic bond as real and as close as that which exists between the members of the physical body. Brought into oneness through the death of Christ Christians are welded together into unity through the life of Christ. The life of the Head flows through the whole body uniting it in an inevitable oneness of faith, love and service. Every Christian is not only a member of Christ but Christians are members one of another.

1 COR. 12: 12, 14, 27, "For as *the body is one, and hath many members,* and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. . . . *For the body is not one member, but many.* Now *ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.*"

ROM. 12: 5, "So *we,* being many, *are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*"

EPH. 4: 25, "*For we are members one of another.*"

The members of Christ's body are fitly framed together and compacted into one. Each member is complementary and supplementary to every other member of the body.

Eph. 4: 16, "From whom *the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,* according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Col. 2: 19, "And not holding the Head, *from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together,* increasing with the increase of God."

Unity between members of the body of Christ was very marvellously manifested in several ways in the first century Church. It was first of all a unity *in faith.* The apostles and disciples believed alike concerning their Lord. Their oneness centered in their crucified, risen, ascended Lord. Around Him they gathered as one heart and one soul because of one mind. They loved each other in the truth and so were one.

Acts 2: 42, "And *they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,* and in breaking of bread and in prayers."

3 John 1, "The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, *whom I love in the truth.*"

It was a unity *in love.* They shared mutually with one another as fellow-members of one body their material possessions and spiritual blessings in Christ.

The need of one was the need of all and each one considered that what he had was for the benefit of all.

Acts 2: 44–46, "*And all that believed were together and had all things common;* And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. . . . And they, *continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,* did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

It was a unity *in purpose.* Repeatedly it says in the Acts that they were "of one accord." They were single-eyed and so were single-hearted. It was a society of kindred spirits with a consuming passion to know Jesus Christ and the consuming purpose to make Him known.

Acts 2: 1, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all *with one accord* in one place."

Acts 5: 12, "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all *with one accord* in Solomon's porch)."

It was a unity *in fellowship.* Difficulties and problems were shared mutually as well as joys and blessings. What affected one member of the body affected all the members. That first century Church knew in experience the meaning of "the communion of saints."

Acts 4: 23, "And being let go *they went to their own company, and reported all* that the chief priests and elders had said unto them."

Acts 20: 36, "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and *prayed with them all.*"

Members of the body of Christ were united also in solidarity in service. Believers who were "added unto the Lord" were also "added unto the church."

Acts 5: 14, "And *believers were the more added to the Lord,* multitudes both of men and of women."

Acts 2: 47, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. *And the Lord added to the church* daily such as should be saved."

Confession of cleansing from sin and separation from life in the old sphere and of entrance into new life through a new birth was made through the act of baptism. Induction into the new order of which Christ is the Head was made public, through this divinely-appointed rite.

Acts 2: 41, "Then *they that gladly received his word were baptized;* and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Through the unity and solidarity of the body of Christ in its corporate life God revealed Himself to the world and worked to accomplish its evangelization. Christ, the Head worked through the members of His body with mighty power to carry the Gospel out into the enemy's territory and to deliver thousands upon thousands of men and women from his power.

Against this unity and solidarity in passion and

purpose the arch enemy of Christ aimed his deadliest darts. The most harmful thing Satan could do to that Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered Church was to work to diminish its power through disunion. This he succeeded to a certain extent in doing. There are recorded divisions between individuals because of a difference in personal viewpoint (Acts 15: 37–40); between groups because of a difference in doctrinal conviction (Acts 15: 1, 5, 24). Then there arose factions within certain churches and each faction sought to gain control of affairs (1 Cor. 1: 11–13). Again one man in the Church who loved preëminence and power was the cause of great dissension (3 John 9, 10).

All down through the centuries the devil has continued to use this method of opposing Christ. A most serious condition exists within the Church to-day which calls for very deep heart searching. In view of the need of the unsaved millions and of the growing apostasy in Christendom the dissensions that exist between individuals, and between groups within the body of Christ, are deplorable. It calls for a careful diagnosis of causes and for a Scriptural prescription of a cure.

The first cause is temperamental differences. Perhaps the majority of dislocations within the body of Christ could be traced ultimately to this source. Earnest Christians are often diametrically opposite in temperament and even the grace of God has not made them congenial companions. They grate on each other. One is mystical and the other is practical; one is militant and the other is gentle; one is refined and

the other is rough; one is social and the other is seclusive; one is scholarly and the other is scatterbrained; one is intense and the other is sluggish; one is Mary and the other is Martha. These people have to live under the same roof and work at the same tasks. By nature and possibly by training their way of looking at things is antipodal and their methods are as different as day and night. Such temperamental differences with their resultant dissensions are the cause of quarrels in the churches at home and of physical breakdowns and enforced furloughs in the Christian ranks upon the mission field.

A second cause is doctrinal differences. Reference is not made here to the disagreement upon fundamentals mentioned above, which is inevitable, but to that which could and should be avoided. I refer especially to the overemphasis upon some particular truth which separates a section of the body of Christ and segregates it to an exclusive corner of the fold. Many sects have been started in this way and to-day even some of the larger denominations are divided into several different branches, differing possibly in but one or two matters of belief. The difficulty arises in studying the Bible from the limited angle of one segment of truth rather than studying that segment of truth from the lofty viewpoint of the whole Bible. Thus this particular truth is dislocated from its proper setting and given a preëminence which the Bible never gives it. To those whose lives have been enriched and blessed by it, it becomes all-important. Sometimes deeply spiritual Christians are excluded from fellow-

ship with such groups simply because they do not put the same interpretation or the same emphasis upon this one particular truth.

Another phase of this same thing is onesidedness in viewpoint caused by some particular experience passed through which makes one critical of others who have not walked in precisely the same footprints. It is such a natural thing to interpret and to judge others' spiritual experiences by one's own yet it is a very dangerous thing to do. One man may feel just as deeply as another yet it may be impossible for him to shout "Hallelujah." He may love his Lord devotedly and yet not be able to use the vocabulary of highly emotional souls. The language with which he testifies of his life of victory and sanctification may not be cast into the mould of any particular school of thought along these deeper lines yet the experience of it may be none the less real. As God has made no two persons alike so He has no stereotyped mould into which He casts the spiritual experience of His children. The truth of His Word is the same for all but the manner of its appropriation and assimilation varies according to the Spirit's dealing with each separate personality. The divine One knows each life through and through and He takes into account the temperament and training, the opportunities and advantages, as He works with infinite patience to bring each one into full maturity of life in Christ. But unsympathetic judgment and censorious criticism of others who have not yet attained to the same degree of experience or who have not come to it by the same road is one of the

commonest sins of earnest Christians and the cause of no little trouble within the body of Christ.

Still another phase is that of a legal attitude that makes for intolerance in matters not clearly revealed in Scripture. An earnest Christian may have convictions not only on essentials but on secondary matters as well. One's belief in the truth should affect one's conduct. God has a clearly defined standard of conduct for those living on the highest plane. There are some things which by the precepts of Scripture God shows us to be wholly outside His will for the new man in Christ; but in other things He guides by principles. Within this realm there will inevitably be a wide difference in interpretation and in understanding. The conduct of every Christian should be undergirded with deep conviction by which he himself abides unswervingly but he should be very careful to give to his equally devout and spiritual fellow-Christian the same right to follow his conviction. At least he should not indulge in backbiting and evil speaking and self-righteous judgment of his brother, but if he feels his fellow-Christian is dishonouring God through something he permits in his life, he should give himself to prayer that fuller light and greater apprehension in this particular matter may be given.

A third cause of division is jealousy and envy due partly to the diversity of gifts. We are distinctly told that this diversity of gifts is intentional on God's part and that He has "divided to every man severally as He will" making one an apostle, another a prophet, another a pastor, another an evangelist and still an-

other a teacher for the express purpose of "perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11, 12). In order to bring the whole body of Christ "unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" the gifts of all these varied types of workers are needed.

And yet behold what takes place! The teacher looks with something akin to contempt upon the evangelist or the preacher. The development and enrichment of the mind seem to him to be all-inclusive of a person's need. He argues that if one is educated he is fully equipped to become what he ought to be. Any work that deals more directly with the heart and the will he dubs "emotionalism" which is to be studiously avoided. The teacher is in great danger of having that obnoxious thing, "a superiority complex." On the other hand the evangelist and preacher may look with suspicion and doubt upon the teacher; they may misjudge him and, because of his apparent absorption in educational pursuits, charge him with no interest in spiritual matters. Such an attitude often produces a censorious spirit that results in bitter backbiting.

Oftentimes church quarrels start among the laymen. Petty jealousies, trivial enmities between individuals produce factions; people take sides; the trouble is broadcasted by gossiping tongues, and God's name is disgraced before unbelievers by a full-fledged church quarrel.

1 Cor. 1: 11–13, "For it hath been declared unto me of you,

my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, *that there are contentions among you.* . . . Now this I say, that every one of you saith, *I am of Paul; and I of Apollos;* and *I of Cephas;* and *I of Christ.* . . . Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

We have given at least a partial diagnosis of the serious malady from which the body of Christ suffers to-day and its resultant weakness. But is there no cure? Is Christ the Head nonplussed before these awful maladjustments within His own body? Does He stand impotent before these hindering dislocations? A thousand times no!

Let us remind ourselves again and again that the true Church, the body of Christ, is of divine construction. God is the architect; the Church is His wondrous workmanship; God Himself "fitly framed together" the parts that make up His holy temple; He "knits together" the living members of the body of Christ. Then He is amply able to readjust any dislocated part of this wondrous organism.

May we suggest what seems to be the Scriptural cure for these manifold dissensions within the body of Christ. It reaches to the very seat of the trouble and affects a double cure, one both of mind and of heart. If Christians were thinking rightly and loving purely every dislocation would be corrected. The whole Church needs a fresh immersion into the very mind of Christ and a new baptism of His love. This double cure was the Apostle Paul's unfailing prescription for the disease of division.

Over and over again he beseeches the Christians under his care to be of one mind. It is possible for differences in opinion, judgment and conviction to be adjusted without compromise if Christians truly seek to be of one mind. If there is an honest, selfless yielding to know the mind of the Lord, there will surely be like-mindedness as a result.

PHIL. 2: 5, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*"

1 COR. 1: 10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; *but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*"

2 COR. 13: 11, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, *be of one mind, live in peace;* and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

The second part of the cure for division is a baptism of love. The whole body of Christ needs to eat, digest, and assimilate 1 Cor. 13 as its daily food. It needs to be filled and to be refilled with the Holy Spirit whose first fruit is love. It needs a deluging and a saturating with the purifying, perfecting love of God until love increases and abounds in the hearts of God's children.

1 THESS. 3: 12, "And *the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another,* and toward all men, even as we do toward you."

PHIL. 1: 9, "And this I pray, *that your love may abound yet more and more* in knowledge and in all judgment."

1 PET. 1: 22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit *unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*"

Twice in Colossians Paul speaks of the members of the body being "knit together." The Greek means "compacted," implying firm consolidation. What can so unite members of the body differing so greatly in temperament, taste, thought and training? Only one thing, a divinely imparted, supernaturally-sustained love, can do it. Such unity comes when all things are done in love.

COL. 2: 2, "That their hearts might be comforted, *being knit together in love.*"

EPH. 4: 15, "But speaking the truth *in love.*"

EPH. 4: 2, "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, *forbearing one another in love.*"

EPH. 4: 16, R. V., "From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body *unto the building up of itself in love.*"

EPH. 3: 17–19, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *that ye being rooted and grounded in love,* . . . May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; . . . *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,* that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

The spiritual man is big enough to recognize that it takes all the millions upon millions of believers in the

past, present and future, until the coming of Christ completes it, to make up that wondrous body. He grasps the truth of that incomparable passage, Eph. 3: 17–19, where words fail even the Apostle Paul as he tries to show that it will take all the saints of all the ages to know the love of God that passeth knowledge. In the apprehension of this transcendent truth the spiritual man sees the terrible sin of jealousy, envy, unlove, strife, enmity, hatred, intolerance, selfishness, quarrelling between members of the body of Christ. He gladly acknowledges that in the Church of God there is both room and need for the mystical, the practical, the philosophical, the scientific, the meditative, the active temperament. He acknowledges the greatness of truth and the absolute inability of any one person or sect to comprehend all truth or to embody its teachings perfectly. He joyfully acquiesces in God's plan of sharing His ministry gifts with all His children, dividing to each according to His divine will that His purpose for the world may be accomplished.

There is a clearly defined attitude which every Christian must take toward his fellow-Christians if he means to live his life on the highest plane. It is an attitude of forbearance, humility, unselfishness, sympathy, frankness, helpfulness, peace and coöperation.

COL. 3: 13, "*Forbearing one another,* and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

PHIL. 2: 3, 4, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; *but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other*

better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

1 Cor. 12: 25, 26, "That there should be no schism in the body; *but that the members should have the same care one for another.* . . . And whether one member suffer, *all the members suffer with it;* or if one member be honoured, *all the members rejoice with it.*"

Rom. 12: 9, R. V., "Let love be *without hypocrisy.*"

Gal. 6: 2, "*Bear ye one another's burdens,* and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Rom. 14: 19, "*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace,* and things wherewith one may edify another."

Gal. 5: 13, "*By love serve one another.*"

Such unity in the body of Christ is the most convincing of all arguments to an unbelieving maladjusted world of the power of the living Christ. Christ prayed that this oneness of mind and heart manifested in His disciples would bring many to believe in Him as the God-sent One. God would glorify Himself through solidarity in the body of Christ Jesus.

John 13: 35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, *if ye have love one to another.*"

John 17: 21, "That they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *that the world may believe that* thou hast sent me."

Dear fellow-member of the body of Christ, are you living in harmonious and peaceful adjustment to every other member of that body? Is there something between you and a fellow-Christian for which you are

responsible? If so, are you satisfied to have such a condition continue or are you ready to let the great Physician heal the breach? He is able to do it if you will coöperate with Him. Your part is threefold.

First, will you lay aside by confession all sin of your heart toward another?

1 Pet. 2: 1, "Wherefore *laying aside all malice,* and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings."

Second, will you live by 1 Cor. 13 every day of your life? Will you let the love-truth of that chapter become your code of conduct? Will you take your spiritual pulse by this infallible thermometer? Will you judge yourself, rather than your fellows, by this divine standard of love? Will you let the Holy Spirit clothe you with love?

Col. 3: 14, R. V., "And above all these things *put on love,* which is the bond of perfectness."

Third, will you unite your prayer with that of your Lord that you may be "made perfect in one" with every other member of His body? And will you allow nothing to remain in your mind or in your heart that separates you even a hair's breadth from any other child of God?

John 17: 23, "I in them, and thou in me, *that they may be made perfect in one.*"

The Spiritual Man's Relationship to the World.

A right adjustment with God necessitates a re-

adjustment of relationship to the world. The boundary line between the spiritual man and the worldling is clearly marked and a wall of separation is built by God. The spiritual man is a non-conformist in his relationship to the world.

ROM. 12: 2, "*And be not conformed to this world;* but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

2 COR. 6: 14, 15, 17, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,* for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? . . . *Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate,* saith the Lord."

The Christian is taken out of the world yet he is sent back into it. For what purpose?

JOHN 17: 18, "As thou hast sent me into the world, *even so have I also sent them into the world.*"

JOHN 20: 21, "Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, *even so send I you.*"

Christ came into the world as the Father's ambassador. Into a world alienated from God He brought "the good tidings of great joy" that a way was opened through Himself back to the Father's heart and home.

The Christian now goes forth as an ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven into the enemy's territory to

carry the message of reconciliation to those who are alienated from God. Having experienced the joy of restoration to God through faith in Christ he cannot rest satisfied until he has brought others into the same joy. So he gladly accepts the responsibilities and obligations resting upon him through this ministry of reconciliation and gives himself to the winning of souls.

2 Cor. 18: 20, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled unto himself by Jesus Christ, and *hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation:* . . . To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and *hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* . . . *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,* as though God did beseech you by us: *we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*"

Christ came into a world enveloped in densest darkness to be its Light. Into that same world every Christian is sent to be a light. In the beauty of the Christian's character and in the blessing of the Christian's service Christ would radiate the sweetness and strength of His own life and draw sinners unto Himself.

Matt. 5: 14, "*Ye are the light of the world.*"

Phil. 2: 15, "That ye may be blameless and harmless the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, *among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*"

The Holy Spirit—The Divine Agent in this threefold Adjustment.

The adjustment which brings the Christian into a

right relationship with God, with his fellow-Christians and with the world, is made by the Holy Spirit who indwells and infills the spiritual man. It is He who takes of the love of the crucified, risen and ascended Christ and sheds it abroad in the heart of the Christian until each one loves the Father as the Son loves Him, and loves the fellow-members of the body of Christ as the Head loves them, and loves the unsaved in the world as the Saviour loves them.

ROM. 5: 5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; *because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*"

1 THESS. 2: 8, "So being affectionately desirous of you, *we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls,* because ye were dear unto us."

Are you rightly related to God? To your fellow-Christians? To the world? If not,

"Be filled with the Spirit."

X

THE HOPE OF THE SPIRITUAL MAN

THE Christian is united to Christ by a golden cord of three strands, faith, love and hope (1 Cor. 13: 13, 1 Thess. 1: 3). Faith and love look back to the Cross and up to the Throne and, claiming the fruits of salvation for the past and the present, use them to the glory of the Lord. But hope looks up into the heavens and waits for that future day when faith shall be merged into sight, when the labour of love shall be rewarded, when the salvation begun in grace shall be consummated in glory.

As the object of the believer's faith and love is the Lord Jesus Himself so is He the object of his hope. The glorious appearing of Christ Jesus, the Saviour, is the Christian's blessed hope.

TIT. 2: 13, "*Looking for that blessed hope,* and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

HEB. 9: 28, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and *unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time* without sin unto salvation."

Our Lord's Return—Announced.

Through prophecies added to those already given through the Old Testament, Jesus Christ gave birth to this hope in the hearts of those first believers. According to His prophecy His second advent was to be

of a totally different nature and for a totally different purpose than His first advent had been. In the first He had come in weakness and humiliation, in the second He would come in regal power and glorious splendour. In the first He had come as a Saviour, to be despised of men and to be crucified upon a Cross set up by wicked men for Him, but in the second He would come as a Sovereign to set up a Kingdom for Himself in which all nations and all men would bow down and serve Him.

MARK 13: 26, (Luke 21: 27), "And then shall they see *the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*"

MATT. 25: 31, "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory,* and all the holy angels with him, *then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.*"

Upon the eve of His exodus He comforted the hearts of His disciples with two promises. One was the promise of another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, during His absence. This promise was fulfilled literally as we have seen. The other was that one day He Himself would return in person to receive them unto Himself to be with Him forever.

JOHN 14: 2–3, "In my Father's house are many mansions, If it were not so, I would have told you. *I go to prepare a place for you.* . . . And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again, and receive you unto myself,* that where I am, there ye may be also."

As the disciples watched Him ascending into Heaven

this promise was reiterated by two men who stood by in white apparel.

Acts 1: 11, "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*"

In the words "this *same* Jesus," "shall *so* come," "in *like* manner," wonderful light was thrown upon the manner of Christ's return to earth. It was to be a personal, visible, bodily coming. Thus the Lord Jesus Himself instilled into the hearts of His first disciples the blessed hope of His literal return to earth.

Our Lord's Return—Anticipated.

This promise of His personal return was ever before them. That little group lived and worked in confident assurance and eager anticipation of the speedy return of the Lord they loved. On the day of Pentecost only ten days after His ascension He fulfilled the promise to send another Comforter; why should they not expect just as truly and even as speedily that His other promises would likewise be fulfilled?

When fifteen and finally twenty years passed by and some of those who had this hope had died, the hearts of others were very disquieted. What would it mean to these loved ones that this blessed hope had not yet been realized? To still this fear Paul writes to them at Thessalonica counseling patient waiting and comforting them with fuller teaching on this precious truth.

1 THESS. 4: 13–18, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. . . . *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* . . . For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that *we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.* . . . *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and *the dead in Christ shall rise first:* . . . *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:* and so shall we ever be with the Lord. . . . Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

So the steadfast confidence of their faith and the intense longing of their love crystallized into an undimmed patience of hope which dominated the everyday life. How fully this blessed hope permeated and possessed the thought and the testimony of the apostles is revealed in a study of the New Testament. In the closing chapters of the Gospels, throughout the book of the Acts and in every Epistle except three Christ's second advent is taught and it is the major theme of Revelation. Three hundred and eighteen times it is mentioned; one verse out of every twenty-five is devoted to it. It was the hope of Paul, Peter, John, James, Jude and the writer of the Hebrews.

1 TIM. 6:14, "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

1 PET. 1: 13, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you *at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

1 JOHN 2: 28, "And now little children, abide in him: that, *when he shall appear,* we may have confidence, and *not be ashamed before him at his coming.*"

JAMES 5: 8, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"

JUDE 14, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.*"

HEB. 10: 37, "For yet a little while, *and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*"

Our Lord's Return—Actualized.

Nineteen centuries have passed since Christ Jesus said that He would return and the prophecies and promises regarding His second advent are still unfulfilled. The greater part of the professing Church have ceased to expect Him. In fact Christendom has set itself to the task of establishing the Kingdom without the King and scoffs at those who, believing that the Lord's promise will be fulfilled literally, still look for His return. Indeed this very scoffing is in itself a part of the fulfilment of prophecy regarding the last days.

2 PET. 3: 2–4, "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: . . . Knowing this first, that *there shall come in the last days scoffers,* walking after their own lusts; . . . And *saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*"

Many preachers and teachers have applied "the blessed hope" of our Lord's return to the death of the believer, to the destruction of Jerusalem, to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and to the gradual dissemination of the Gospel and the diffusion of Christianity over the whole earth. But the spiritually minded Christian believes that every prophecy regarding His second advent will be fulfilled as literally as were those of His first and waits for the coming of the Lord Himself from Heaven.

The return of the Lord Jesus Christ has a special relationship to three groups of people, to Israel, to the Church and to the Gentile nations. A comprehensive study of this subject in all its bearings will deeply repay every Christian. But in these studies we must confine ourselves to the bearing of Christ's return upon the redemption of the individual believer from sin and all its consequences, upon the reconciliation of all things unto God and upon the restoration to God of sovereignty over the universe.

The return of the Lord Jesus Christ will mean the consummation of the believer's identification with Christ. The believer will be identified with his Lord as regards place, personality and power. Where Christ is he will be; what Christ is he will become; what Christ does he will share.

Where Christ is the Christian will be. Christ promised this to His disciples. "Where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14: 3). He prayed that they might be with Him in glory. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I

am; that they may behold my glory" (John 17: 24). Then He went back into the glory. The disciples remained on earth and He came to be with them through the indwelling Holy Spirit. But one day He is coming to take His own to be with Him.

COL. 3: 4, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, *then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*"

What Christ is the Christian will become for he shall become a partaker of Christ's glory. He shall be glorified together with Him in spirit and in body.

ROM. 8: 17, "And if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, *that we may be also glorified together.*"

1 PET. 5: 1, 10, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, *and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.* . . . But the God of all grace, *who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus,* after that we have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

The glorification of the Christian will involve the full redemption of his body which for the dead in Christ means resurrection and for the living means translation.

"The wages of sin is death" and there can be no final victory over sin that does not include victory over death. Death has laid claim all these ages to the bodies of God's saints, and still holds them captive in the grave. "But the sky not the grave is the goal

of the Christian" and this will be proven when at the sound of the trump of God the graves of those asleep in Christ shall be opened and they shall be raised from the dead.

A few days ago I visited the cemetery on the hillside and saw there one tombstone in the form of a broken pillar. What a symbol it is of what every grave there means—a broken family circle! A broken thread of life that spelled manifold severed relationships! Will there ever be a reunion? Praise God there will be for those in Christ Jesus! The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the sure pledge of the resurrection of every believer. "Because I live ye shall live also," He has said and He will do. Through His resurrection He became "the first fruits of them that sleep" and thus made not only certain but essential the resurrection of every member of His body.

1 THESS. 4: 16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; *and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*"

1 COR. 15: 20–23, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and *become the firstfruits of them that slept.* . . . For since by man came death, *by man came also the resurrection of the dead.* . . . For as in Adam all die, *even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* . . . But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; *afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*"

Oh! what comfort this can bring to those called upon to watch at the bedside of one whose life is slowly

ebbing away; to endure the suffering of laying that loved one in the grave and to return to the loneliness of the home bereft of that presence. The blessed hope of our Lord's return calls the Christian to turn his gaze toward that resurrection morning when that loved one in Christ will come forth from the darkness of the grave to live in the power of an endless life. "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?"

1 Cor. 15: 54, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory.*"

For those who are alive at Christ's coming it will mean a marvellous victory over death also, the conquering of death through not dying! It will not be the victory of resurrection but of translation.

Through the new birth the human body is dignified by being made the habitation of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit's indwelling it is fitted to be the channel for the revelation of the Lord Jesus and to be an instrument for His use. Grace has done much to purify and magnify the human body.

Yet it often grows so tired, weak and sick. It is so full of limitations and oftentimes a hindrance and a drag. And it is such a target for Satan and such an instrument of sin. It is liable at any moment to fall a victim to death's precursor, disease. So Scripture pictures the body as groaning under its burden of

weariness and weakness and as crying out for the day of its release.

ROM. 8: 23, R. V., "And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, *even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*"

2 COR. 5: 2–4, "*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:* . . . If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. . . . *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened:* not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life."

But one day in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, those who are alive will be changed. "The twinkling of an eye takes two motions, the downward and the upward one." Just recently a friend has suffered anguish of spirit in watching a dearly loved sister slowly starve to death through the cruel ravages of disease until death seemed a happy release. But oh! when He comes, in the twinkling of the eye—apart from disease, death and decay—our mortal body shall have put on immortality. One moment here in bodies weak and worn; the next moment there in bodies powerful and glorious!

"O joy, O delight, should we go without dying,
No sickness, no sadness, no sorrow, and no crying,
Caught up in the clouds to meet Him in glory,
When Jesus receives His own."

1 THESS. 4: 17, "*Then we which are alive and remain shall*

be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

1 Cor. 15: 51–53, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, . . . *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,* at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, *and we shall be changed,* . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Sin robbed the human body of the garment of light which the Creator gave it. But grace will give to it a robe of glory beautiful beyond anything we can conceive for we are some day to be wholly conformed to the body of His glory. On the mount of transfiguration the curtain was drawn aside momentarily to give just a little idea of what our glorified body will be like. "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." And of us Christ Himself said, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

1 Cor. 15: 49, "As we have borne the image of the earthly, *we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*"

Phil. 3: 20–21, R. V., "For our citizenship is in heaven; *whence also we wait for a Saviour,* the Lord Jesus Christ: . . . *who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory,* according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself."

The Weymouth Translation is "The Lord Jesus

will transform this body until it resembles His own glorious body." And this is just what identification with Christ in glory will mean to the body of the believer.

The glorification of the Christian will mean the consummating of his sanctification. Through identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, resurrection and ascension the believer's sanctification is begun, through the Holy Spirit's indwelling and infilling it is continued but it will not be completed until we are identified with Him in His glory.

1 THESS. 5: 23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless *unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

PHIL. 1: 6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*"

Will our deep-rooted desire for real likeness to Him ever be fulfilled? Praise God that also belongs to our blessed hope. Our spirit often eager and earnest, yet as often dulled and deadened by sin, will then be like His in all the fulness of His glorified, divine being. The purpose of our sonship will have been consummated in our perfected likeness to the Son. When we shall see Him face to face we shall be like Him; we shall ever bear His name which stands for His nature in our foreheads as His own personal seal to our full conformity to Himself.

1 JOHN 3: 2, "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but *we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him;* for we shall see him as he is."

REV. 22: 4, "And they shall see his face; *and his name shall be in their foreheads.*"

The completion of sanctification is perfection; it is the deliverance not only from the penalty and power of sin but from its very presence. So long as we are in the body of flesh and in the world, within is a sinful nature and without is a sinful environment. But at the coming of the Lord the believer in Christ will be removed from the presence of sin both within and without. He will then breathe the pure air of the Glory-land and be himself purified. Then he will be:

"Without spot"—absolutely free from the stain of sin;

"Without wrinkle"—beyond the reach of suffering or sorrow, anxiety or anguish or aught that causes the furrows of care;

"Holy"—even as He is holy—"as the bush was luminous with the divine fire, so shall the luminosity of the divine nature make us aflame with the holiness of Jehovah";

"Without blemish"—delivered from inner corruption and outer contamination we shall be perfected with His perfection. Our Saviour will then see the travail of His soul and be satisfied for He shall present us "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

EPH. 5: 27, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, *not having spot, or wrinkle,* or any such thing; but *that it should be holy and without blemish.*"

JUDE 24, "Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and *to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*"

When Christ returns, the Christian will be identified with him in dominion. What Christ does he will share in doing. He will be a partner of His power. The God-man shall have recovered his rightful dominion over His universe and the saints, as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ," shall be given their share in this inheritance and together with Him shall reign upon the earth.

DAN. 7: 18, "*But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever,* even forever and ever."

REV. 5: 10, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall reign upon the earth.*"

REV. 20: 6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and *shall reign with him a thousand years.*"

The God-man is now in Heaven. The Father is on the throne and the Son is at His Father's right hand. But some day when He shall have conquered every enemy the Son is to have His own throne. This throne He promises to share with every one who, while here on earth, has lived the life of an overcomer.

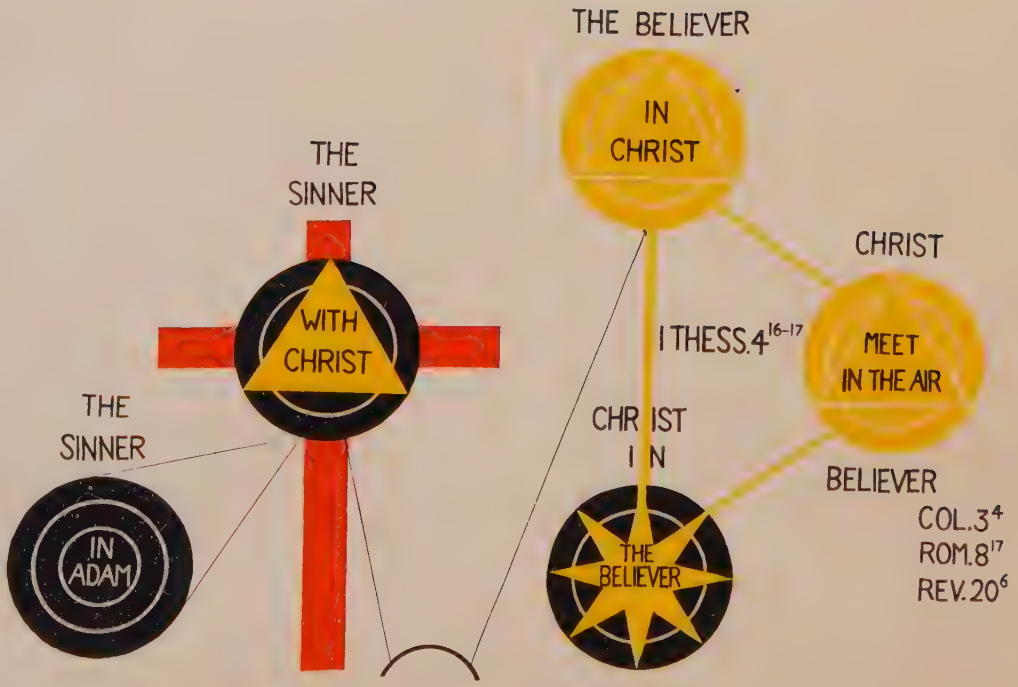


DIAGRAM XIII

HOPE OF THE SPIRITUAL MAN

MATT. 22: 44, "The Lord said unto my Lord, *Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.*"

REV. 3: 21, "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne,* even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." *

The return of the Lord Jesus Christ will effect the consummation of the reconciliation of all things unto Himself. A time is coming when Jesus Christ will be the center of everything in Heaven and upon earth; when everything will be directly related to Him and will head up in Him.

EPH. 1: 10, "*That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ,* both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him."

That time will usher in the last of the divinely-ordered ages which condition human life upon the earth; it will register the answer to the prayer "Thy kingdom come", and it will mark the fulfilment of the prophecy that Jesus Christ, as the seed of David, should be King over His own Kingdom upon this earth.

2 SAM. 7: 12–13, (spoken to David), "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, *I will set up thy seed after thee,* which shall proceed out of thy bowels, *and I will establish his kingdom.* . . . He shall build an house for my name, and *I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever.*"

ISA. 9: 6–7, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: *and the government shall be upon his shoulder.*

* Diagram XIII.

. . . *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David* and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

LUKE 1: 32–33, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and *the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: . . . And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*"

Scripture constantly speaks of a day that is coming when the Heir of all things will claim His possessions and exercise His power. It is called "the day of the Lord." In that day all that is proud and haughty and lifted up against Him in rebellion and resistance shall be brought low and the Lord alone shall be exalted and magnified as King of kings and Lord of lords.

ISA. 2: 12, 17, "*For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty,* and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: . . . And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: *and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.*"

REV. 19: 11, 15, 16, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty

God. . . . And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Men everywhere are acknowledging the awful confusion and chaos which exists in the moral world. Some are working to effect reconciliation within Satan's world-system through world courts, peace conferences, leagues of nations and international community houses. Others, believing such things are inadequate, hope that the millennial state will be ultimately produced by the progressive betterment of the world through the Holy Spirit's work and the preaching of the Gospel. Through the gradual diffusion of the Kingdom of God throughout the world they expect the kingdom of evil to be conquered and, as it were, absorbed into it. But the spiritually-minded man who knows and accepts the prophetical teaching of God's Word believes there is no hope of universal peace until the Prince of Peace sits on His throne and Himself rules in justice and righteousness. He believes there can be no millennium such as Scripture portrays until the Satanic world-system based on self-love, self-interest, self-exaltation and self-will is overthrown.

A careful study of the word "until" as used repeatedly in the Bible in connection with our Lord's return amply justifies such a belief. The Christ who came once *in grace* must come a second time *in government* before He recovers all that was lost to Him through the fall and before there can be a reconciliation of all things unto Himself.

Ez. 21: 27, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, *until he come whose right it is: and I will give it to him.*"

Acts 3: 20, 21, "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive *until the times of restitution of all things,* which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

1 Tim. 6: 14, 15, "That thou keep this commandment without spot unrebukeable *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew,* who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Seiss says on this point, "My Bible tells of no millennium which existing processes are to bring about. Neither does it tell me of a millennium which is to precede the Saviour's second advent. The only millennium I read of in the Holy Book is that which is to be introduced by the glory and power of Christ's coming and the chief excellence of which is His personal presence and reign with His saints upon the earth. It is not the reign of art, science, human culture or free governments, for which the Bible teaches me to look; nor yet for the universal triumph of Christianity or the Church as we now have it; nor yet for the reign of justice, holiness or any mere abstract principles; *but the personal reign of Jesus my Lord.*"

But when the Man comes whom God has appointed to rule the world, the righteous King, He will rule in righteousness and the result will be peace. Then all problems will be solved; all wrongs righted; all

breaches healed; all wars ended, because all things in God's moral universe shall be readjusted and re-established according to the perfect will of God. "All the universe will feel the beneficence of His rule and the benediction of His peace."

Isa. 32: 1, "*Behold a king shall reign in righteousness,* and princes shall rule in judgment."

Isa. 11: 4–5, "*But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:* and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. . . . *And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,* and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

Jer. 23: 5, 6, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and *a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.* . . . In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the name whereby he shall be called. THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Ps. 67: 4, "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: *for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.*"

When Christ, the King, reigns there will be *national peace.* Now the whole world is in a state of incipient war. "All Europe is armed to the teeth and the nations all watching each other with acute suspicion, and trembling with fear over the volcano of a suppressed Armageddon." The newspapers almost daily chronicle "rumours of war." But the coming of the Prince of Peace will end war.

Isa. 2: 4, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: *and they shall beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*"

Micah 4: 2, "And *many nations shall come, and say,* Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob and *he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths* for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

When Christ, the King, reigns there will be *social reconstruction.* The day of oppression, greed, selfishness, injustice will be ended because sin will be instantly detected, judged and punished. "When the Prince of Peace comes He will allay every disturbing element; hush the din caused by sin; put down every wrong; still every clamouring tongue; calm every raging sea of unrest; touch and heal every inflamed sore of society; unite into the harmony of accord every quarrelsome crowd; pilot every perplexed barque of humanity tossed on the sea of life, into the harbour of rest; heal every epileptical torture of suffering; adjust every turmoil of difference by His rule of equity, and harmonize all conflicting claims in the melting fire of His love." *

Isa. 26: 9, "When thy judgments are in the earth, *the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*"

Ps. 72: 3–4, 12–14, "The mountains shall bring peace to

* *What Will Take Place When Christ Returns?* F. E. Marsh, p. 122.

the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. . . . *He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. . . . He shall spare the poor and the needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*"

ZECH. 14: 20, "In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD: and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar."

When Christ the King reigns there will be *material prosperity*. Vast fortunes will not be massed in the hands of a few but each man shall have sufficient and shall live in contentment.

MICAH 4: 4, "*But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree:* and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

ISA. 65: 21, 22, 23, "*And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant olive yards, and eat the fruit of them.* They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."

When Christ the King reigns there will be universal health and longevity.

Isa. 33: 24, "*And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.*"

Isa. 35: 5–6, "*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. . . . Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:* for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Isa. 65: 20, "*There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old;* but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed."

In the coming age under the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ mankind will be given a chance to attain to a perfection of personality, spiritual, intellectual and physical which is impossible for us to conceive of and the human race will enter upon a life of harmony and concord that the most optimistic cannot picture to-day.

When our Lord comes again it will mean redemption and renovation within His whole creation. Sin brought a curse upon the earth and upon the animal creation. Its destructive power and extensive reach are seen in the terrible disturbance caused within the divine harmony of creation. Everything in God's inanimate world is touched by death and decay and is robbed of its greatest utility and beauty by the blasting curse which sin brought.

So there is a minor key even in Nature. The whole creation is weighted by a burden that constrains it to groan; it is subjected to a slavery that compels it to cry out for emancipation. It waits with impatience for the manifestation of the sons of God which will usher

in that glad day when it too will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

ROM. 8: 19–22, "For the earnest expectation *of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. . . . For the creation was subjected to vanity,* not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope. . . . *That the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*"

But "in the day of the Lord" all these conditions will be changed. "The miserere of Nature will become a jubilate." Even the life of the jungle will be lived in harmony. The earth will then yield her increase and the whole creation will sing its praises unto God, its Maker and Redeemer.

ISA. 55: 12–13, "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: *the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. . . . Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree:* and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

ISA. 11: 6–9, "*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.* . . . And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; *and the*

lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. . . . *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:* for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Finally, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ will effect the consummation of the restoration to God of sovereignty over His universe. Can such a victory ever be won until the usurping "prince of this world" is dispossessed and destroyed? There can be no millennium while Satan remains in the heavenlies or on earth for it is impossible to be rid of his world-system until rid of him. Through His regenerating power the Holy Spirit can and does deliver the believer from the power of Satan but He cannot deliver him from his presence. Satan is still here and will be until the Lord returns.

Genesis records Satan's victory and the rejection of God; Revelation records the dethronement of Satan and the enthronement of Christ. "The seed of the woman" born in the manger-cradle of Bethlehem and crucified on the Cross of Calvary must stand upon the Mount of Olivet before the bruising of the serpent's head is finally consummated and the perpetual curse pronounced upon Satan is executed. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for one thousand years.

ZECH. 14: 4, "*And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives,* which is before Jerusalem on the

east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

REV. 20: 1–3, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. . . . *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. . . . And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him,* that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

With the head of the world-system dethroned the triumphant Lord is restored to His rightful rule over the earth.

ZECH. 14: 9, "*And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.*"

REV. 11: 15, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever.*"

REV. 19: 16, "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, *Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*"

At the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed for a season. He will reveal his unchanging and unchangeable disposition to self-will and his implacable hatred toward God by going forth to deceive the na-

tions and by making a futile effort to regain his lost dominion.

REV. 20: 7–9, "And *when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.* . . . And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. . . . And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

This rebellion ends in his utter undoing and destruction. God's full and final judgment is now meted out upon him. He is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented forever.

REV. 20: 10, "*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,* where the beast and the false prophet are, *and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.*"

Then God's victory is consummated. Every enemy is at last put under His feet and the sovereignty of the triune God is absolute.

1 COR. 15: 24, 25, 28, R. V., "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; *when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power.* . . . *For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.* . . . And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, *that God may be all in all.*"

Is it any wonder that Satan hates the truth of the Lord's return and that he does all within his power to discredit, discourage and destroy those who hold and preach this blessed hope? He has no place for the second coming of the Lord in his "gospel" and his "ministers" either rail at or ridicule those who have it in theirs. One reason why we may well believe that we are in the last days is the fact of the violent and venomous attacks of Satan's instruments upon this glorious truth on the one hand and the growing preciousness and deepening influence of this hope upon those who love His appearing on the other.

Our Lord's Return—Attitude.

With such a glorious prospect before the believer, one would expect him to have just one possible attitude toward our Lord's return—that of eager expectancy and ardent desire. Yet strange to say there are four very evident attitudes manifested in the professing Church toward this blessed hope; aggressive hostility, listless apathy, fearful apprehension and loving expectancy. Some hate it; some are totally ignorant of it; some are afraid of it and some love it. In which group do you find yourself?

God shows very clearly in Scripture what is the attitude of the spiritual man toward our Lord's return. May He now speak to the heart of every reader through His own Word.

2 PET. 1: 19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy: *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,* as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

"*Take heed.*" Think of how much both of the Old and the New Testament is devoted to prophecy—the foretelling of things to come. God tells us here that these prophetic words are reliable, they will most assuredly come to pass. Should we not then give heed to that which God thinks to be of such tremendous importance? Surely to be apathetic to that to which God commands us "to give attention with heart intentness" would be sin. In these dark days what can so truly keep us from depression over conditions in the world and in the Church and from discouragement over ourselves and our work as to concentrate our attention upon and become absorbed with this sure word of prophecy that shines like a light in the darkness.

2 Tim. 4: 8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not to me only, *but unto all them also that love his appearing.*"

"*Love.*" The aged apostle knew that his life-work was nearly ended. Perhaps his body still bore the marks of the stripes and was weakened from the periods of hunger and thirst; his heart still felt the wounds caused by the persecutions of his own countrymen and the desertions of false brethren; his spirit was still burdened by the spiritual need of all the churches under his care; yet his whole being was aglow with joy. He had fought a good fight, he had finished his course, he had kept the faith through all the hardships and heartaches. And what had been the incentive for such a life? Paul had loved his Lord's ap-

pearing. Even in the darkest experiences of his life he had ever before him the anticipation of "that day" when the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him a crown of righteousness, and within the heart of Paul there burned like a fire a love for his Lord's appearing that eclipsed every other love. Do you ever waken in the morning or fall asleep at night with the thought, "O, to-day, to-night, my Beloved may come?" Do you "love His appearing" to such a degree that you are longing for His return with eagerness and expectancy?

2 PET. 3: 12, R. V., "*Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God,* by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"

"*Look.*" Who could ever be apprehensive of our Lord's return who understands what that coming will mean to this dark, sin-cursed world? In times of exceptional calamity the hearts of ignorant ones are terrified by the thought that it is "the end of the world." Others, equally ignorant of the great prophetic truths, charge those who hold this blessed hope with being pessimistic and with looking upon world conditions in too sombre and gloomy a way. Such men shudder at the very thought of what they call the "catastrophic cataclysm" of the premillennial view.

But the Christian who looks expectantly for our Lord's return is the only true optimist because he alone sees things both as they are and as they will be. To shut one's eyes to actual conditions and to deny the self-evident trend of affairs and their logical, inevitable

outcome as revealed in the Word of God is not optimism but folly. The man who believes the sure word of prophecy and takes it as his compass knows that perilous times are ahead; he sees the way the world's ship of life is taking; he sights the rocks ahead and he knows that a frightful disaster is unavoidable.

Recently I read in the newspaper this account of a wrecked steamer, "The steamer *Robert E. Lee*, crack passenger liner bound from Boston to New York with 150 passengers and an equal number in the crew, went ashore in a blinding storm on the Mary Ann Rocks four miles off shore about eight o'clock in the evening. The ship struck one of the three jagged rocks that project about five feet above the low water mark." The next day the paper gave the reason for this catastrophe as stated by the ship's commander. "The wreck of the steamer *Robert E. Lee* on the rocks off Manonut *was due to a faulty compass*. Because of the consequent inaccuracy of the vessel's course, the ship would have piled up on the shore at Indian Head, three miles farther on, even if she had escaped the treacherous Mary Ann Rocks on which she grounded." The captain of the vessel attributed the changing of the compass largely "to the penetration into the pilot house of large quantities of snow, driven in through the windows by the severe gale."

The existing world-system has a faulty compass. The wintry drifts of enmity toward God have settled in upon it and made it wholly inaccurate. The world is steering straight for the rocks upon which it will sooner or later be wrecked.

But back of the " catastrophic cataclysm " that ends the rule of " the prince of this world " and overthrows this world-system the spiritual man sees the glorious appearing of the Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ to rule the world, and beyond " the dissolving of the heavens " and " the melting of the elements " he sees " the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." So with almost impatient longing he " looks " for the coming of the Lord.

1 THESS. 1: 10, "*And to wait for his Son from heaven,* whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

1 COR. 1: 7, " So that ye come behind in no gift: *waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

" Wait." Let us not miss the sweetness of this precious truth by failing to apprehend the inwardness of its meaning. We have told some of the blessings that will come to the Christian through our Lord's return, his resurrection from the dead or his translation without dying; his removal from the very presence of sin; his release from all bondage to self and to Satan; his reign with the Lord as co-heir of the kingdom. Yes, all these and other blessings await us upon the coming of the Lord.

Yet the chiefest of all blessings will be missed if we stop here. What we wait for is not a blessing but a Person. We wait for God's Son, our Saviour; it is the Bridegroom, our Beloved, for whom we wait. He has promised to come for His own to receive them unto Himself. When He comes, we shall meet *Him* in the

air; we shall see *Him* face to face; we shall be like *Him;* and we shall forever be with *the Lord.* .

I was travelling once in China from Shanghai to Foochow. A missionary who had been separated from his family for a year was returning home. At Shanghai he had received a large number of letters from his wife which he read and reread apparently devouring every word with a hungry heart. But long before we were near enough to Foochow to discern even the outline of the city he had cast aside his letters and was standing with eyes fixed in the direction of that city. As we drew still nearer he shaded his eyes with his hand; he waited, he watched with steady, fixed intentness. Why did the letters which had so engrossed him when he left Shanghai not satisfy him now? For whom was he looking so intently? Soon in the distance we saw a little boat coming and in it was a woman—his wife and Oh! what joy was theirs when hope was rewarded by sight and those two so long separated were together once again.

Our Lord has gone away to prepare a place that we may be with Him forever. During His absence our hearts are comforted and cheered through His Word and we find precious companionship with Him in its study. But He promised to come back and, as we draw nearer and nearer to "the day of Christ" with hearts fixed intently upon this blessed hope, we wait for the *Son Himself* from Heaven.

MATT. 24: 36–42, R. V., "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither

the Son, but the Father only. . . . And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. . . . For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall be the coming of the Son of man. . . . Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken and one is left; . . . two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left. . . . *Watch therefore:* for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh."

MARK 13: 33–37, R. V., "Take ye heed, *Watch* and pray: for ye know not when the time is. . . . It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, *commanded also the porter to watch.* . . . *Watch* therefore: for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock crowing, or in the morning: . . . *Lest coming on you suddenly he find you sleeping.* . . . *And what I say unto you I say unto all. Watch.*"

"*Watch.*" Life will be flowing on in its ordinary channels when "the day of Christ" finally comes. We will rise to the ordinary tasks; we will be in our accustomed haunts; we will be eating, drinking, working and sleeping as usual.

No warning will be given us that we may hastily prepare ourselves to meet the Lord. No time will be given to change our occupation or our garments. So there is but one attitude for the Christian to have toward the coming of the Lord and that is the attitude

of watchfulness. He may come *any* moment, therefore I should be watching *every* moment.

REV. 2: 25, "But that which ye have already *hold fast till I come.*"

"*Hold fast.*" In these days of growing apostasy the Christian is meeting with very severe tests to his faith, love, zeal and fidelity. The man who rejects the foundation truths of God's Word considers the man who holds them fast an intellectual outcast and consigns him to the slums of scholarship. This is a day in which men are suffering persecution for their faith. As the shadows deepen and the darkness of the apostasy falls more heavily over Christendom every man who is loyal to his Lord will have "to go forth without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb. 13: 13). But with a tenacity of faith that nothing can shake; with an ardency of love that nothing can quench; with a warmth of zeal that nothing can dampen; and with a constancy of fidelity that nothing can weaken, the spiritual man will "hold fast" to all that is his in Christ till He comes.

LUKE 19: 12–13, "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. . . . And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, *Occupy till I come.*"

"*Occupy.*" The Christian who looks and longs for the Lord's return is sometimes accused by those who

reject this truth of being a visionary, impracticable star-gazer, waiting idly for something to happen to release him from a doomed world. They even claim that such a hope "cuts the nerve of service." Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, the exact opposite of this is true. From the early Church on down to the present time it is the men and women who have held this truth who have been the most zealous, ardent, active soul winners. Their one passion was to trade with the pound which their Lord had given them until it had brought Him ten pounds. Their chief concern was not that they themselves might be released from a doomed world but that they might be the channels which the Lord would use to deliver others from it. With unwearied devotion and unflagging zeal they have obeyed the Lord's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature. The paramount purpose of their lives was to "occupy" faithfully till He comes.

Our Lord's Return—Approach.

Is the time for the fulfilment of the Christian's hope drawing near? Is the Lord's return near at hand? We are told explicitly in Scripture that we know neither the day nor the hour that our Lord will come. Then of course, it is impossible to fix a date for this glorious event. Yet some, attempting to do this, have brought great discredit upon this precious truth.

MATT. 25: 13, "Watch therefore, for *ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*"

Yet our Lord Himself in His great prophetic address in the last week of His earthly life stated that

there would be signs that would indicate the approach of His return in power and glory and He exhorted His disciples to watch for such signs.

LUKE 21: 25–28, "And *there shall be signs* in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; . . . Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. . . . And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. . . . *And when these things begin to come to pass,* then look up and lift up your heads; *for your redemption draweth nigh.*"

The Bible unfolds the divine program in the carrying out of God's eternal purpose in Christ. It is divided into definite cycles. There are certain signs which will precede the consummation of the cycle or "age" we are now in and the Spirit-taught Christian will be able to discern these "signs of the times." To-day "the children of light" see in the conditions prevailing both in the world and in the Church a marvellous fulfilment of prophetic truth regarding "the last days" of this age and they believe it indicates the approach of the Lord from glory.

1 THESS. 5: 4–6, "*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness,* that that day should overtake you as a thief. . . . *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day:* we are not of the night, nor of the darkness. . . . Therefore let us not sleep as others; but let us watch and be sober."

HEB. 10: 25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, *as ye see the day approaching.*"

LUKE 21: 31, "So likewise ye, *when ye see these things come to pass,* know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

In the limited scope of this study we can mention only four signs which Scripture says will immediately precede "the day of the Lord" and indicate its approach.

MATT. 24: 31–33, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and *they shall gather together his elect from the four winds,* from one end of heaven to the other. . . . Now learn a parable of the fig tree; *when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know the summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see these things know that it is near, even at the doors.*"

The prophecies of God if they relate to the fulfilment of His divine purposes on earth center in the Jewish race and in the land of Palestine. Repeatedly He says that this people, who have been scattered among all peoples and have lived as exiles for two thousand years, are to be gathered out from all the nations and restored to their own land. As the prophecy that God would take them from their land was fulfilled literally so will the prophecies that He will return them to their land and give it to them as an everlasting possession be as literally fulfilled.

Israel is typified by the fig tree. For centuries she

has been withered, dead, fruitless nationally. Yet the Jewish race has been divinely preserved as a distinct people and has never been absorbed by the nations among whom it has been scattered.

But in the last few years there has been marked evidence of new national life in Israel. Through the Zionist Movement which has as its purpose the restoration of Israel to Palestine, through the action of the Allies since the World War in committing themselves to the return of Palestine to the Jews, the fig tree is again putting forth leaves.

"Since General Allenby entered Jerusalem on that never-to-be-forgotten day December 9th, 1918, the fig tree has been putting 'forth leaves' with amazing rapidity. Over 55,000 Jews have returned to Palestine since the Balfour Declaration. The population has more than doubled during the five years of Sir Herbert Samuel's Commissionership. A Hebrew University on Mount Scopus was opened on April 1st, 1925. Trade has flourished and the revenue shows a surplus of one and a quarter millions. The sacred custom of going up to the Passover was observed in the spring of 1922 for the first time in nearly 2,000 years. The Sanhedrin has been revived. Schools have been established. A shipping company has been formed by wealthy American Jews for the purpose of carrying Jews back to Palestine." *

MATT. 24: 33, "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

* *Signs of Christ's Coming,* by E. E. Hotchell, p. 914.

LUKE 21: 24, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; *and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*"

Perhaps no sign is more significant than this one. In the recent World War a prophetic prediction became an historical fact. Christ had said that the liberation of Jerusalem from Gentile overlordship would not take place "*until*" a certain time and then stated what that time would be. "The times of the Gentiles" refers to the period from the captivity of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar and the dispersion of Israel from her land until the setting up of the Kingdom by the return of the King and His reëstablishment of His chosen people in the land He gave them. Jerusalem has been emancipated and is to-day virtually in the control of the Jews. Then may we not confidently believe that "the times of the Gentiles" are at least nearing fulfilment and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh?

LUKE 21: 25, 26, "Upon the earth *distress of nations,* with perplexity: . . . *Men's hearts failing them for fear,* and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

One needs only to observe conditions and to read the daily newspaper to be convinced that this prophecy is being fulfilled at the present time. Everywhere one looks there is tumult and turmoil. World leaders are distressed knowing not what to do to put the world right. Universal anarchy threatens the world and they do not know how to cope with it. To the man with

this blessed hope the very hopelessness in present world conditions demands the coming of the only One who can set the world right and to indicate that His coming must be near.

1 THESS. 2: 3–4, "Let no man deceive you by any means: *for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed,* the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

2 TIM. 3: 1–5, "This know also, that *in the last days perilous times shall come.* . . . For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, . . . Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. . . . Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

These passages reveal the truth that in the apostasy of the last days there will be two outstanding marks, religious decadence and moral deterioration. These signs are appallingly evident to-day. Every distinctive foundational truth of the Christian faith, the virgin birth, the Deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the literal resurrection and the Lord's return, are openly and avowedly denied in the pulpit and in the religious press and, as a result, in the pew. With almost incredible arrogance men are tearing the Bible to pieces and retaining only what suits their desire.

Following inevitably upon this rejection of God's Word and refusal of His authority is the breaking loose from all other bonds, parental and magisterial. A wave of lawlessness is sweeping irresistibly over the world which is bound to engulf it ultimately.

Liberalism in belief produces license in conduct. The laws of human society are disregarded and every man becomes a law unto himself. This is the day of divorce, free love, companionate marriage. It is the day of the discarding of parental authority and advice. It is the day of shameless immodesty and indecency in dress. It is the day of bold corruption and dishonesty in high places in governmental affairs. It is the day of traitors and truce breakers, when friends may become enemies over night, and when treaties, solemnly made, may be lightly broken. It is the day of moral deterioration.

God says that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" so that there would be nothing for this world to look forward to but moral suicide unless the Lord Jesus Christ were to return to save it from itself. But these things are to happen in "*the last days*" so the hope of the spiritual man burns brightly for they are to him a sign that the approach of the Lord is sure.

These signs constitute both a call and a challenge to the Christian. A call to reaffirm his hope, to lift up his head and to rejoice that his redemption draweth nigh. And a challenge to fill his lamps with oil and to prepare his bridal robes that he may be prepared for the coming of the Lord.

Our Lord's Return—Appeal.

The coming of the Lord will be with suddenness and without warning. The constraining appeal that this blessed truth makes to every man is for readiness. The Lord Jesus warns us of the terrible peril of unpreparedness for His return and appeals to all men to be ready and watching so that whether He comes in the second or in the third watch they will not be caught unawares but will be ready to welcome Him.

LUKE 12: 35, 36, 40, "*Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; . . . And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord,* when he will return from the wedding: that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. . . . *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*"

What appeal does the truth of our Lord's return make to the unsaved person? It appeals to him to accept without delay the Lord Jesus as his personal Saviour. Christ warns us that in the day when He shall be revealed unsaved men will be as indifferent as in the days of Noah. They will be engrossed in business and in pleasure, utterly forgetful of their Lord. Suddenly He will come—a wife will be taken and the husband left; a child will be snatched from the mother's arms; a business associate will be caught away to meet his Lord in the air and his partner will be left to carry on alone.

MATT. 24: 40–41, "Then shall two be in the field; *the one shall be taken and the other left.* . . . Two women

shall be grinding at the mill; *the one shall be taken, and the other left.*"

And what will it mean to the one who is left? It will mean the ending of the day of grace and the beginning of the day of judgment. The rejected Saviour will then be the righteous Judge before whom the ungodly must stand and receive their punishment for He has come to execute judgment.

2 THESS. 1: 7–9, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, . . . *in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:* . . . *who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.*"

All down through the ages there have been those who have mockingly said "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. 3: 3–4). Ten days after His return to glory He fulfilled the promise to send another Comforter. More than nineteen centuries have passed and He has not yet fulfilled the promise that He would come again. Oh! why does He not come?

2 PET. 3: 9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; *but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*"

Oh! my friend, perhaps He delays His coming for *your* sake. He may be waiting for *you* to accept Him. *You* may be the last one needed to complete the body

of the Lord Jesus Christ. God may be holding the door of grace open a little longer for *you* to enter. Will *you* do so to-day?

What appeal does the truth of the Lord's return make to the saved person? It is a threefold appeal, to purity of life, to separation from the world and to zeal in service.

The outstanding appeal of the blessed hope is to purity of life. It challenges us to be both holy and righteous, to be void of offence both to God and to men. It calls us to so live that we would be unashamed to meet Him face to face at any moment.

1 JOHN 3: 3, "And every man that hath this hope in him *purifieth himself even as he is pure.*"

2 PET. 3: 14, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, *be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*"

1 JOHN 2: 28, "And now little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, *we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*"

If Christ should come to-day would He find you with a clean heart? Or would it be filled with rebellion toward Him? With jealousy, unforgiveness, hatred, anger, malice, bitterness toward another? Would He call you to Himself out of the midst of a church quarrel? If Christ should come to-day would you leave behind unpaid debts? unfulfilled promises? unconfessed sins? Oh, Christian, He may come at any moment, "be diligent that ye may be found of him *in peace, without spot and blameless.*"

The hope of our Lord's return appeals to us to live a separated life. In the twinkling of an eye we shall have left earth and earthly things and shall be in the pure atmosphere of His holy presence which is to be our abiding place throughout eternity. God would have us prepared to breathe that heavenly air by a separation now unto the things that are unseen and eternal; He would deafen our ears to the jazz noises of earth that we might be prepared to appreciate the melodious symphonies of Heaven. He would deepen within us the consciousness that we are already citizens of Heaven and only pilgrims on earth that we might be freed from encumbersome luggage, that we might be ready to go at a moment's notice.

PHIL. 3:20, R. V., "*For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour.*"

1 PET. 1: 13–14, "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, *be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* . . . As children of obedience, *not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance.*"

The hope of our Lord's return appeals to us to live a fruitful life. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns He will bring rewards and will bestow crowns for faithful service. A special crown is waiting for those who have zealously won souls to Christ. Will you be in line for coronation? Are you doing your part to hasten the day of His coming by winning souls to Him?

REV. 22: 12, "And behold I come quickly: *and my reward is with me,* to give every man according as his work shall be."

1 THESS. 2: 19, "For *what is our* hope, or joy, or *crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye* in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

"Just a few days—and our tears will have ended;
Just a few hours—and our task will be done;
Yet still hear them calling,
From darkness appalling,
While we rest in the light of the fast-setting sun.

"Just a few days—and the gifts we've withholden,
Just a few hours—and the call we refuse——
Will rush on forever,
Or return to us never,
And Eternity's crown we no longer may choose.

"Just a few days—and then nought will avail us,
The thought of the crown that we might yet have won;
And ah! what the sorrow
If we miss on the morrow
Our share in that joy, when He whispers, 'Well done!'

"Just a few days—Oh Lord, strengthen our courage;
Just a few moments—to publish Thy Name.
In our weakness enfold us,
Through darkness uphold us,
'Till He Come,' make us faithful Thy love to proclaim."

"Surely, I come quickly.
Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

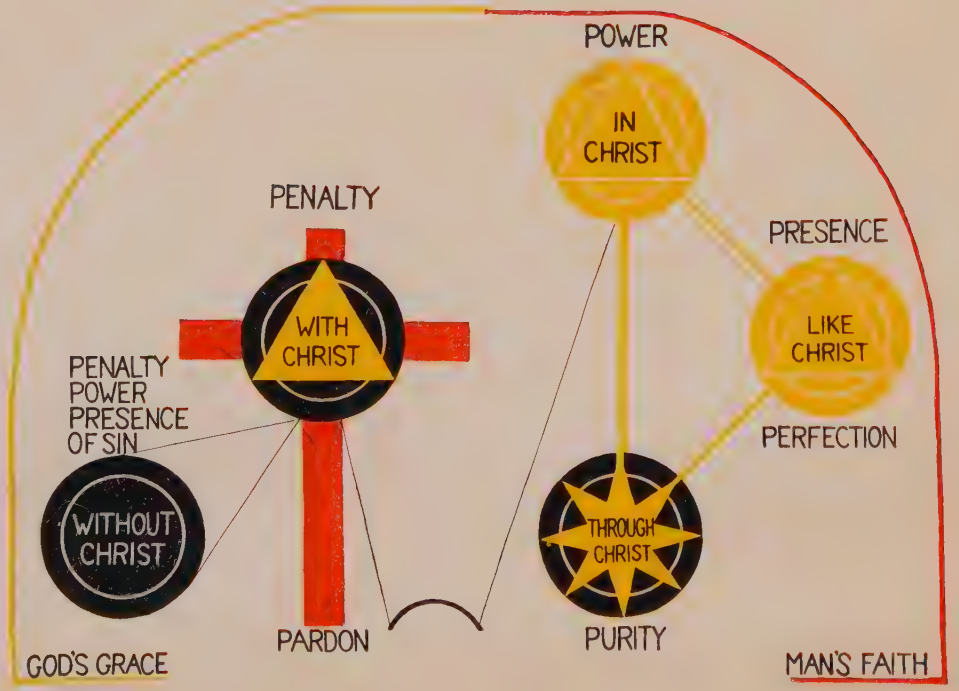


DIAGRAM XIV

THE STORY OF SALVATION

XI

THE STORY OF SALVATION TOLD IN FIVE CHAPTERS *

CHAPTER I **The Sinner in Adam. Without Christ.**

The penalty of sin is upon him.
The power of sin is over him.
The presence of sin is in him.

Without Christ

The sinner. Without hope.

CHAPTER II **The Sinner at the Cross—With Christ.**

The penalty of sin is removed by Christ, the Saviour.
Pardon is granted.
Righteousness is imputed.

Justification.

The sinner's past. Covered.

CHAPTER III **The Believer in the Heavenlies. In Christ.**

The power of sin is broken by Christ, the Lord.
A new sphere is entered.
A new life is implanted.
A new nature is imparted.

Regeneration.

The believer's present. Assured.

* Diagram XIV.

CHAPTER IV The Believer on the Earth—Through Christ.

The place of sin is taken by Christ, the Life.

Dead to { Sin / Self } Alive to God.

Sanctification.

The believer's present. Secured.

CHAPTER V The Believer in the Air. Like Christ.

The presence of sin is effaced by Christ, the King.

He is perfected into His likeness.

He is conformed to His image.

Glorification.

The believer's future. Transfigured.

EPH. 2: 8–9,

"*For by grace are ye saved through faith,*
And that not of yourselves:
It is the gift of God:
Not of works, lest any man should boast."

"IT IS FINISHED."

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